


Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

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Important Days

Date	Day	Theme/Others
March 1	Zero Discrimination Day (First celebrated in 2014)	End Inequalities
March 1	45th Civil Accounts Day	Nirmala Sitharaman was the Chief Guest of the event
March 1	Third Jan Aushadhi Diwas	Jan Aushadhi Kendras conducted Health Check-up Camps across the country
March 3	World Hearing Day	Screen, Rehabilitate, Communicate
March 3	World Wildlife Day (The day was proposed by Thailand and recognised in 2013 by UNGA)	Forests and Livelihoods: Sustaining People and Planet
March 4	National Safety Day (1 st time celebrated in 1972)	Sadak Suraksha (Road Safety)
March 4	National Security Day (Rashtriya Suraksha Diwas)	Honor of the Indian Security Forces. (First NSD was held in 1972.)
March 8	International Women's Day (It was first observed in 1909, adopted in 1975 by UN)	Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world
March 11 (2 nd Thursday)	World Kidney Day	World Kidney Day Steering Committee has declared 2021 the year of "Living Well with Kidney Disease"
March 13	World Sleep Day	Regular Sleep, Healthy Future
March 14	International Day of Mathematics	Mathematics for a Better World
March 15	World Consumer Rights Day	Tackle Plastic Pollution
March 16	National Vaccination Day	Observed to celebrate the Indian government's Pulse Polio Campaign (First dose of Oral Polio Vaccine was given in India in 1995)
March 20	International Day of Happiness	Happiness For All, Forever (established by the UNGA in 2012; 1 st celebrated in 2013)



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March 20	World Sparrow Day (First World Sparrow Day was celebrated in 2010)	I LOVE Sparrows (was initiated by the Nature Forever Society of India in collaboration with the Eco-Sys Action Foundation (France))
March 20	World Oral Health Day	Be Proud Of Your Mouth
March 21	International Day of Forests	Forest restoration: a path to recovery and well-being (It was established by resolution of the UNGA on Nov 28, 2012)
March 21	World Poetry Day	The day was declared by UNESCO in 1999
March 21	International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	Youth standing up against racism
March 21	World Puppetry Day	It was first held in 2003
March 22	World Water Day	Valuing Water
March 23	World Meteorological Day (It was established on March 23, 1950)	The Ocean, Our Climate and Weather
March 24	World Tuberculosis Day	The Clock is Ticking
March 24	International Day for the Right to the Truth concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims	The day proclaimed by the United Nations in December 2010
March 27	World Theatre Day	It was initiated in 1961 by the International Theatre Institute. Author of Message: Helen MIRREN, United Kingdom
March 27 Last Saturday of the March	Earth Hour (Organized by the World Wide Fund)	Climate Change to Save Earth (It was started as a lights-off event in Sydney, Australia, in 2007)
March 31	World Backup Day	World Backup Day began as World Backup Month, by a hard drive company named Maxtor which was later acquired by Seagate Technology.

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March 31	International Transgender Day of Visibility	It was founded by US-based transgender activist Rachel Crandall of Michigan in 2009
March 31	International Day of Drug Checking	It was celebrated since 2017

Important Banking News

RBI

RBI imposes Rs.2 crore penalty to SBI

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has imposed a monetary penalty of **Rs.2 crore** on State Bank of India (SBI) for contravention of certain provisions of Section 10 of the **Banking Regulation (BR) Act, 1949** and the central bank's specific directions issued to the bank on payment of remuneration to employees in the form of commission.
- This penalty has been imposed in exercise of powers vested with RBI under the provisions of BR Act, it added.
- RBI said the statutory inspection of the bank with reference to its financial position as on **March 31, 2017 and March 31, 2018** and the **Risk Assessment Reports (RARs)** pertaining thereto, and examination of the correspondence with the bank regarding payment of remuneration to its employees in the form of commission, revealed, inter alia, contravention of the provisions of the Act and aforesaid specific directions issued by RBI.

RBI to examine a proposal to merge two or more Urban Cooperative Banks

- As per the '**Amalgamation of Urban Cooperative Banks, Directions, 2020**', issued by the RBI, it may consider proposals for merger and amalgamation among **UCBs under three circumstances**, including when the net worth of the amalgamated bank is positive, and the amalgamating bank assures to protect entire deposits.

RBI set up a panel to examine applications for banks, SFBs

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has set up a **five-member Standing External Advisory Committee** for the purpose of **evaluating applications for Universal Banks as well as Small Finance Banks**.
- The **panel** will be headed by **former RBI Deputy Governor Shyamala Gopinath** and the **other members are**: Revathy Iyer, Director, Central Board, Reserve Bank of India; B Mahapatra, former executive director, RBI and presently chairman of National Payments Corporation of India; TN Manoharan, former chairman, Canara Bank; and Hemant G Contractor, former MD, State Bank of India and former chairman, Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority.
- The **tenure** of this SEAC will be for **three years**.
- In November 2020, the RBI made public a working group report that recommended that well-run large non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), with an **asset size of Rs 50,000 crore and above**, including those which are owned by a corporate house, should be considered for conversion into banks.

RBI announces average base rate of 7.81% for NBFC-MFIs

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- Various loans offered by **Non-Banking Finance Companies (NBFC)** and **Micro Finance institutes (MFI)** are expected to be cheaper from April 1.
- Reserve bank of India communicated that the applicable base rate to be charged as **7.81 per cent**.
- It is **lower by 15 basis points (0.15 %)** as compared to the current quarter.
- Last year it was **8.76 during the same period**.
- On the last working day of every quarter, RBI advises interest rates to be charged by **NBFC-MFIs** to their borrowers in the ensuing quarter.
- It is based on the average of the **base rates of the five largest commercial banks**.

RBI further extends limitations on PMC Bank for 3 months till 30 June 2021

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has once again extended the restriction imposed on scam-hit **Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative (PMC) Bank** for a further period of **3 months till June 30, 2021**.
- The restriction puts curbs on the withdrawals and deposits activity of the lender.
- This restriction was first placed in **September 2019**, and since then has been consecutively extended.
- The previous restriction was set to expire on March 31, 2021.

Policy Rates

Parameter	Percentage
Repo Rate	4%
Reverse Repo Rate	3.35%
Marginal Standing Facility Rate	4.25%
Bank Rate	4.25%
Cash Reserve Ratio	3%
Statutory Liquidity Ratio	18%

SBI

SBI-sponsored RRBs launched video-KYC facility

- **Telangana Grameena Bank, Andhra Pradesh Grameena Vikas Bank** becomes first RRBs in the country to adopt this tech that offers zero contact onboarding of customers, at par with commercial banks.
- The **Digital Insta Savings Account mobile app of Andhra Pradesh Grameena Vikas Bank (APGVB) and Telangana Grameena Bank (TGB)** was launched recently by State Bank of India chairman Dinesh Kumar Khara.
- The app will be at the heart of the **Digital Insta Savings Account (DISA)** launched by the two regional rural banks.
- The benefits of DISA include zero balance account; can be opened within 10 minutes and activation of mobile banking and SMS alerts immediately.

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- Rupay debit cards will be issued and the account holders need to successfully complete e-KYC at home branch or video-KYC within one year.

SBI MF Launches First Overseas Fund

- The **State Bank of India (SBI) Mutual Funds** has launched its **first overseas** offering on 1 March 2021.
- The fund titled SBI International Access US Equity FOF is an open-ended fund of funds scheme investing in mutual fund schemes/ETFs that invest in US markets, which are domiciled overseas.
- The scheme will invest **95-100 percent** of its net assets generally in Amundi Funds US Pioneer Fund (including ETFs), which invest predominantly in the US markets.

Main features of the scheme :

- **International diversification:** Provides international diversification to the portfolio and provides investors the opportunity to invest in themes not available in the Indian market.
- **Lower correlation:** Aids in mitigating overall risk by investing in a market that has lower correlation to Indian markets.
- **Currency depreciation:** Provide investors the opportunity to benefit from any depreciation in the Indian currency as against the currency of the underlying fund.

Minimum Investment Amount :

- The customers interested in the scheme are required to invest at least Rs 5,000 for the first time. However, for additional purchase the minimum application amount is Rs 1,000.
- There is no upper cap for the investment in this fund.

NPCI, SBI Payments join hands to launch "RuPay SoftPoS" for merchants

- **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)** partnered with **SBI Payments** to announce the launch of 'RuPay SoftPoS' for millions of Indian merchants.
- This innovative solution has the capability to transform NFC enabled smartphones into merchant Point of Sale (PoS) terminals for the retailers. Merchants will now be able to accept contactless payments of up to ₹5000 through a simple tap and pay mechanism on their smartphones.
- RuPay SoftPoS will provide cost effective acceptance infrastructure to retailers at nominal cost. This unique phenomenon would be able to proliferate digital payment acceptance among millions of underserved Indian MSMEs.
- Merchants can convert their existing android smartphone devices into a payment terminal by simply downloading a supported app.
- This solution will revolutionize the way micro and small merchants receive payments and create a demarcated shift in their tendency to deal in cash to accepting secure, contactless digital payments instead.
- The RuPay SoftPoS solution will provide cost effective acceptance infrastructure to retailers at nominal cost.

World Bank

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World Bank plans \$100-mn guarantee scheme for solar rooftop projects

- The **World Bank** plans to introduce a **\$100-million** credit guarantee scheme to **boost India's rooftop solar programme**.
- The scheme will allow **micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs)** to avail concessional debt financing for setting up rooftop solar units.
- The World Bank scheme, along with State Bank of India (SBI) and the MSME ministry to accelerate adoption of rooftop solar units, will help MSMEs access credit of around **\$1 billion**.
- The arrangement will be beneficial for the firms that often do not meet the lending criteria of banks and other financial institutions, with their financial woes being exacerbated by the covid-19 pandemic.

World Bank to provide USD 200 million to Bangladesh as financial assistance

- The **World Bank** has approved **USD 200 million** to help Bangladesh to **provide support and services to the low-income urban youths impacted by COVID 19 pandemic** and the migrants who had to return involuntarily.
- The **Recovery and Advancement of Informal Sector Employment (RAISE)** project of World Bank is aimed to benefit about **1.75 lakh poor urban youth** through **training, apprenticeship programme, counselling, micro and self-employment support**.
- It will also help about **2 lakh migrants** who were forced to return to Bangladesh to reintegrate in the domestic labour migrate or prepare for re-migration.
- The funding will provide them cash grants and counselling services based on their needs and aspirations.
- **World Bank Country Director for Bangladesh and Bhutan, Mercy Tembon** said that migration and the urban informal sector played a key role in Bangladesh's remarkable success in reducing poverty over the years.
- The project will support both the groups of workers to overcome structural barriers to gain employment.

WEF

Wipro joins World Economic Forum initiative to advance racial justice, social equality

- **Wipro** has joined the **World Economic Forum's (WEF) 'Partnering for Racial Justice in Business'** initiative to promote **a culture of diversity, inclusion, equity and justice for people** of all racial backgrounds in the workplace.
- The initiative is **aimed** towards driving action and accountability for companies to confront racism at a systemic level, set new global standards for racial justice in business and accomplish necessary policy changes for inclusion and advancement of professionals with under-represented racial and ethnic identities, said the company in a press release.

Other Banking News

NPCI enables UPI AutoPay live on music streaming platform 'Gaana'

- **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)** has announced that **UPI AutoPay** has now gone live on **Gaana**.

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- Its integration with UPI AutoPay has made Gaana the first player in the Media and Entertainment industry to roll out the innovative e-mandate feature on UPI.
- The introduction of UPI AutoPay will empower Gaana's users to experience a smooth and seamless mechanism of renewing their subscriptions.
- Customers can enjoy premium, uninterrupted streaming of their choicest music, podcasts and radio without having to remember about the subscription renewal date.
- The strategic role played by Paytm and Juspay as payment aggregators will create a superior transaction experience for the customers.
- Based on the mandate, the subscription amount will be deducted automatically on the authorized date without entering UPI PIN.

SIDBI joins hands with AP govt for Development of MSME ecosystem

- **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Andhra Pradesh to develop the MSME ecosystem in the State.**
- The MoU was signed by J V N Subramanyam IAS, Director of Industries, Commerce and Export Promotion, Government of Andhra Pradesh and Sanjay Jain, General Manager, Regional Head, Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), Hyderabad, in the presence of Mekapati Goutham Reddy, Cabinet Minister of Industries, AP government.
- Under the agreement, a Project Management Unit (PMU) will be deployed by SIDBI to design schemes/programmes in the areas of equity support, interest subvention, resolution of stressed MSMEs, and facilitate intervention based on evaluation of the existing status of MSMEs.
- The PMU will study the existing framework of schemes currently available for MSMEs in the State and shall suggest modifications, if any, to enhance efficacy.

IRDAI issues guidelines for standard personal accident cover

- The **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)** has directed all general and health insurance companies to mandatorily offer a **standard personal accident insurance policy by 1 April, 2021.**
- The policy will be named Saral Suraksha Bima, succeeded by the name of the insurance company. It will be offered with a tenure of one year.
- As per the final guidelines issued by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDA), the minimum sum insured will be Rs.2.5 lakh and maximum sum insured Rs.1 crore.

Federal Bank will launch credit cards in next few months

- **Federal Bank** is set to **launch credit cards in coming months** and remains bullish about growth opportunities on the retail portfolio.
- "We are in the process of getting into **credit cards. In a couple of months** from now, we will be there," said Shalini Warriar, Executive Director, **Federal Bank.**

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Paytm steers India's digital payments - 1.2 billion monthly transactions

- Digital financial services firm Paytm said it achieved over **1.2 billion monthly transactions** on its platform, driven by growth in offline payments and financial services.
- “We have been promoting all digital payment methods giving multiple choices to consumers that have helped us in consolidating our leadership position.
- In fact, a large percentage of our users who started their digital journey with Paytm, have now adopted & embraced our financial services,” **Narendra Yadav, Paytm vice-president, said.**

SBI General Insurance sign bancassurance pact with IOB

- **SBI General Insurance** and **Indian Overseas Bank** have signed a bancassurance agreement for distribution of non-life offerings.
- “Through the alliance, SBI General will offer a range of general insurance solutions and innovative products to IOB customers

Sebi eases listing rules for large IPOs, paving way for LIC's mega float

- The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi)** eased the listing norms for large companies, apparently paving the way for the much-awaited mega float of **Life Insurance Corporation (LIC)**.
- The regulator said large companies can now divest a minimum 5 per cent in the IPO, instead of 10 per cent. Further, they will get five years, instead of three, to raise the public float to 25 per cent.
- This move would encourage large firms to opt for listing.
- The meeting was also attended by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Minister of State (Finance and Corporate Affairs) Anurag Thakur.

Fino Payments Bank is now a scheduled bank

- **RBI** has announced through a notification issued dated 22 February 2021 that **Fino Payments Bank** has been included in the Second Schedule to the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934.
- The scheduled commercial bank (also called as scheduled bank) status allows Fino Payments Bank to enhance its banking position in the treasury and participation in LAF (Liquidity Facility) window as per the RBI. It also helps the bank strengthen its business proposition on liabilities generation.
- As a scheduled commercial bank, Fino Payments Bank will be better positioned to explore and manage government businesses. Mandates pertaining to pensions, provident funds and various welfare schemes under **direct benefit transfer (DBT)** will help enhance Fino's foot print in the financial inclusion space. Also, increased visibility on the government websites strengthens the customers' bond with the bank.
- Scheduled Commercial Banks in India are categorised into five groups based on their ownership/nature of operation.

These bank groups are:

- State Bank of India and its Associates
- Nationalised Banks

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- Regional Rural Banks
- Foreign Banks
- Other Indian Scheduled Commercial Banks (in the private sector)

Bank of India organises cricket tourney in Guntur

- **Bank of India** organised a cricket tournament for **AMO Guntur, Zonal Office Vijayawada and AMO Tirupati at Pichukulagunta Grounds in Guntur.**
- Bank of India Vijayawada Zonal Manager **V Somasekhar** was the chief guest at the event. Deputy Zonal Manager D Ram Prasad supervised the conduct of the programme.
- While Tirupati AMO team won the first prize, Guntur AMO team won the second prize.
- Srikalahasti branch manager N Jogireddy has been declared as Man of the Series. Officials of 50 branches in the State participated in the tournament.

Government amends Insurance Ombudsman Rules, 2017

- **Government** on 2nd March 2021 **notified comprehensive amendments to the Insurance Ombudsman Rules, 2017**, with a view to improve the working of the Insurance Ombudsman mechanism to facilitate resolution of complaints regarding deficiencies in insurance services in a timely, cost-effective and impartial manner.

About the amendments :

- The Ombudsman mechanism was administered by the Executive Council of Insurers, which has now been renamed as the **Council for Insurance Ombudsman**
- Earlier, the scope of complaints to the Ombudsman was limited to only disputes, but now it has been enlarged to include deficiencies in service on the part of insurers, agents, brokers and other intermediaries.
- The amended rules have also enlarged the scope of complaints to the Ombudsman and insurance brokers have been brought within the ambit of the redressal mechanism.
- To strengthen the timeliness and cost-effectiveness of the mechanism, policyholders will now be enabled for making complaints electronically to the Ombudsman.
- The new rules notified through an official gazette also pave way for setting up a complaints management system to enable policyholders track the status of their complaints online.
- Further, the Ombudsman may use video-conferencing for hearings.

Kotak Mahindra Bank steer salary account of Indian army personnel

- Private sector lender **Kotak Mahindra Bank** will handle the salary account of the Indian army personnel.
- **The bank** has signed a **memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Indian Army** for a salary account.

PNB Housing Finance and Yes Bank sign strategic co-lending pact

- **PNB Housing Finance** said it has **tied up with Yes Bank** for a strategic co-lending service that will facilitate retail home loans at competitive rates.

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- PNB Housing Finance said in a regulatory filing that PNB Housing and Yes Bank will synergise capabilities to provide an efficient and seamless experience to existing and new retail home loan customers.
- It added that this strategic co-lending agreement will offer "**convenient and customised retail loans to homebuyers at competitive interest rates**".
- PNB Housing and Yes Bank will jointly do due diligence and co-originate the loan at an agreed ratio.

HDFC ERGO's new Business Kisht Suraksha to protect MFIs from natural calamities

- **HDFC ERGO General Insurance** has introduced **Business Kisht Suraksha** a unique cover aimed at protecting the balance sheet of **MFIs**, financial institutions and banks in the event of a **catastrophe** or **natural disaster**.
- It aims to limit the impacts on the balance sheet of financial institutions, due to non-payment of EMIs by borrowers, resulting out of listed calamities such as **floods, earthquakes, cyclones**, etc.
- Business Kisht Suraksha aims to address these concerns by indemnifying against these climatic changes whilst also protecting financial institutions from rising NPAs occurring due to the impact of natural disasters.
- Business Kisht can be customised as per the needs of an individual MFI or financial institution.
- The product can also be tailor-made depending on the geographical presence of the borrower, MFI or any financial institution basis the perils/climatic conditions that the location is prone to.

SEBI cancels registration of Sahara India Financial Corporation as Sub-broker

- Markets regulator **Sebi** cancelled the **certificate of registration of Sahara India Financial Corporation** as a sub-broker citing its failure to fulfill the "**fit and proper**" criteria.
- The regulator had appointed a designated authority in 2018 to enquire whether Sahara India Financial violated provisions of Intermediaries Regulations.
- According to the designated authority's report, considering the antecedents of Subrata Roy Sahara and the various judicial pronouncements against him and other group companies of Sahara, it is determined that Sahara India Financial (noticee) is not a "fit and proper person" to continue as a sub-broker in the securities market.
- In the **12-page** order passed Sebi Whole Time Member G Mahalingam said that he was in agreement with the findings of the designated authority that the notice is not a "fit and proper person" in terms of Intermediaries Regulations.

KVGB launches new loan scheme for women entrepreneurs

- The **Dharwad-headquartered Karnataka Vikas Grameen Bank (KVGB)** has launched the '**Vikas Asha**' loan scheme for women.
- This **new loan scheme** is exclusively for women to meet business-related needs, including purchasing machinery/equipment/vehicle, and working capital requirements under micro and small enterprises, including retail trade.
- Under this scheme, the bank will extend loan up to a maximum of **Rs.10 lakh** with a repayment period of 84 months.

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IDBI Bank remove from RBI's PCA framework

- Shares of **IDBI Bank** zoomed nearly **18 per cent in early trade** after RBI removed the lender from its enhanced regulatory supervision or **Prompt Corrective Action (PCA)** framework after a gap of nearly four years.
- The stock started on a positive note, and jumped 17.12 per cent to Rs 44.80 on BSE.
- On NSE, it rallied **17.64 per cent to Rs 45**.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had placed IDBI Bank under PCA framework in May 2017, after it had breached the thresholds for capital adequacy, asset quality (net NPAs was over 13 per cent in March 2017), return on assets and the leverage ratio.

Image-based Cheque Truncation System in all branches by Sep 30 - RBI

- **The Reserve Bank of India** has asked banks to implement the **image-based Cheque Truncation System (CTS)** in all branches by **September 30 this year**.
- The move is aimed at **faster settlement of cheques resulting in better customer service**.
- Last month, the RBI had announced pan-India coverage of CTS by bringing all bank branches under the image-based clearing mechanism.
- The Apex bank said that to leverage the availability of CTS and provide uniform customer experience irrespective of location of her/his bank branch, it has been decided to extend CTS across all bank branches in the country.
- To facilitate this, banks will have to ensure that all their branches participate in image-based CTS under respective grids by September 30.

Image Cheque clearing system:

- There's now a new way of **clearing cheques more easily and quickly across the UK**.
- The **Image Clearing System** allows banks and building societies to exchange images of cheques instead of moving paper around the country.
- This new approach means you can withdraw money much sooner.
- **Cheque Truncation System:**
- **Cheque truncation system** is an arrangement which facilitates the electronic processing of a **cheque** with the use of **Magnetic Ink Character Reader (MICR)** data and the scanned image of the instrument without involving any physical exchange or movement of the financial instrument.

AU Small Finance Bank raises Rs.600 crore by QIP

- **AU Small Finance Bank** on announced that it has completed the allotment of equity shares under its Qualified Institutions Placement and has **raised Rs.625.5 crore through** the issuance of **50 lakh equity shares** at an issue price of **Rs.1,251 per share**.

About the Bank:

- **AU Small Finance Bank Limited** is an Indian scheduled commercial bank that was founded as vehicle finance company AU Financiers Ltd in 1996 and converted to a small finance bank on **19 April 2017**.

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Nabard's Rural Business Incubation Centre sets in Gujarat

- In order to boost rural innovation and entrepreneurship in the agri-businesses, **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard)** launched **Rural Business Incubation Centre (RBIC)** in Gujarat.
- The seventh in the country and first for Gujarat, the RBIC is set up at **Sardar Krushinagar Dantiwada Agricultural University, in Banaskantha district.**
- The centre is being set up with a total project outlay of **Rs.10.31 crore** of which, the NABARD grant assistance is **Rs.7.81 crore** over five years, during which it looks to support 140 new start-ups, of which 125 will be graduated and 102 new products/technologies commercialized.
- **Besides Gujarat**, the RBICs are also functional in the States of **Tamil Nadu, Haryana, West Bengal, Telangana, and Madhya Pradesh.**

Jan Dhan accounts swell to 42 cr with total balance at Rs.1.4-lakh cr

- The total number of basic bank accounts under **Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY)** has reached **42 crore.**
- According to the latest data available with the government, the total number of beneficiaries (account holders) stood at **42 crore**, with a total deposits of **Rs.1,39,864 crore** as on **March 10, 2021.**
- **RuPay cards** have been issued to **30.85 crore account holders.**
- Of this, public sector banks and regional rural banks have 33.23 crore and 7.52 crore accounts, respectively, while private sector banks have 1.25 crore accounts with them.
- More than half of the beneficiaries of PMJDY are women at 23.27 crore.

About Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana:

- **Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana** is a financial inclusion program of the **Government of India** open to **Indian citizens**, that aims to expand **affordable access** to financial services such as bank accounts, remittances, credit, insurance and pensions.

Piramal Capital and Housing Finance raises Rs.4,050 crore

- **Piramal Capital and Housing Finance Ltd (PCHFL)**, a wholly owned subsidiary of **Piramal Enterprises Limited (PEL)**, has raised **Rs.4,050 crore** through issuance of long-term, five-year non-convertible debentures (NCDs) in two tranches.
- The first tranche of the NCD issue, amounting to **Rs.2,000 crore**, opened on March 10 with a pay-in on March 12, 2021.
- The second tranche of the remaining Rs.2,050 crore opened on March 18 with a pay-in on March 19, 2021.
- **“CARE Ratings has assigned an ‘AA’ rating for both the issuances,”** the company said in a statement.

DHFL deal

- The fund raise comes just weeks after the **Reserve Bank of India** gave PCHFL the approval to acquire troubled **Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd (DHFL).**

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- The total consideration for DHFL was **Rs.34,250 crore**, comprising an upfront cash component of **Rs.14,700 crore** and a deferred component of **Rs.19,550 crore**.

National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development Bill, 2021 - introduced in Lok Sabha

- **Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman** will introduce the **National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development Bill, 2021** in the Lok Sabha.
- The bill seeks to establish the **National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development**.
- Its objective is to support the development of long-term non-recourse infrastructure financing in India including development of the bonds and derivatives markets necessary for infrastructure financing and to carry on the business of financing infrastructure.
- Besides, in business of the Lok Sabha, the **Finance Bill, 2021** and the Government of **National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2021** are also listed.
- In the Rajya Sabha business schedule, the Appropriation Bill, 2021 is listed for consideration and return.

ICICI Bank initiates instant EMI facility on net banking for high value transactions

- Private sector lender **ICICI Bank** has launched an instant **EMI facility** on its internet banking platform.
- Called '**EMI @ Internet Banking**', the facility would allow pre-approved customers to convert **high-value transactions up to Rs.5 lakh** into easy monthly instalments (EMIs).
- ICICI Bank in the present day introduced the launch of an instant EMI (Equated Monthly Instalments) facility on its web banking platform.
- The '**EMI @ Internet Banking**' facility aims to supply elevated affordability to hundreds of thousands of pre-approved customers, because it allows them to convert their high-value transactions up to Rs 5 lakh into simple month-to-month instalments.
- The financial institution claims, this facility will herald enhanced buyer expertise as customers will get the good thing about EMIs immediately and in a totally digital method.
- With the EMI facility, customers will probably be in a position to buy gadgets or pay for his or her insurance coverage premium or college charges in simple EMIs from their financial savings account utilizing the web banking platform.

J&K: NABARD organizes credit camp in Samba district

- In the **Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir**, **NABARD** organized a credit camp in Samba district for the members of **Joint Liability Groups (JLGs)** to provide collateral free institutional credit support to landless farmers, sharecroppers, oral lessees, small & marginal farmers and other rural poor to take up farm, off-farm and non-farm activities.
- **More than 60 members** from various **JLGs promoted by NABARD** participated in the credit camp. Deputy General Manager (DGM), NABARD, Jammu, Anamika while speaking on the occasion, informed that the formation of JLGs was started by NABARD with the objective to augment the credit flow to farmer's especially landless farmers,

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sharecroppers, oral lessees, small & marginal farmers and other rural poor to take up livelihood activities for their income generation.

Revision Points

Organizations	Headquarters	President/CEO/Head
Reserve Bank of India	Mumbai	Shaktikanta Das
State Bank of India	Mumbai	Rajnish Kumar
World Bank	Washington DC	David Malpass
Federal Bank	Aluva	Shyam Srinivasan
Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India	Hyderabad	Subhash Chandra Khuntia
Kotak Mahindra Bank	Mumbai	Uday Kotak
NABARD	Mumbai	Harsh Kumar Bhanwala
Indian Bank	Chennai	Padmaja Chundurur
FlipKart	Bengaluru	Kalyan Krishnamurthy
Cashfree	Bengaluru	Reeju Datta, Akash Sinha
Paypal	San Jose, USA	Dan Schulman
ICICI Bank	Mumbai	Sandeep Bakshi
HDFC Bank	Mumbai	Sashidhar Jagdishan
Kotak Mahindra Bank	Mumbai	Uday Kotak
Ferbine Pvt Ltd	Mumbai	Suprakash Mukhopadhyay & Modan Saha
Piramal Capital and Housing Finance Ltd	Mumbai	Khushru Jijina
CARE Ratings	Mumbai	Ajay Mahajan
AU Small Finance Bank	Jaipur	Sanjay Agarwal
IDBI Bank	Mumbai	Rakesh Sharma
Karnataka Vikas Grameena Bank	Dharwad	P Gopi Krishna
Sahara India Financial Corporation	Kanpur	Subrata Roy
HDFC ERGO General Insurance	Mumbai	Ritesh Kumar
National Payments Corporation	Mumbai	Dilip Asbe

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of India		
Small Industries Development Bank of India	Lucknow	Mohammad Mustafa
Paytm	Noida	Vijay Shekhar Sharma
SBI General Insurance	Mumbai	Prakash Chandra Kandpal
Indian Overseas Bank	Chennai	Partha Pratim Sengupta
Life Insurance Corporation	Mumbai	M R Kumar
Fino Payments Bank	Mumbai	Rishi Gupta
Bank of India	Mumbai	P R Rajagopal
PNB Housing Finance	New Delhi	Hardayal Prasad
Yes Bank	Mumbai	Prashant Kumar
Fitch Ratings	New York	Paul Taylor
Amazon	Washington	Jeff Bezos
Hershey	Pennsylvania, USA	Michele Buck
Magma HDI General Insurance Company	Mumbai	Rajive Kumaraswami
Maruti Suzuki	New Delhi	Kenichi Ayukawa
Adani Green Energy Limited	Ahmedabad	Vneet S Jaain
SkyPower Global	Toronto, Canada	Kerry Adler
Central Bank of India	Mumbai	Matam Venkata Rao
Securities and Exchange Board of India	Mumbai	Ajay Tyagi
Karnataka Bank	Mangalore	Mahabaleshwara M. S
Mi India	Beijing	Manu Kumar Jain (Indian Head)
Jaguar Land Rover	Coventry, United Kingdom	Thierry Bollore
WhatsApp	California, USA	Will Cathcart
Biocon Ltd	Bengaluru	Siddharth Mittal
Libbs Farmaceutica	Sao Paulo, Brazil	Alcebíades de Mendonça Athayde Junior
Neelachal Ispat Nigam Ltd	Bhubaneswar	Sashi Shekhar Mohanty
Prasar Bharati	New Delhi	Shashi Shekhar Vempati
Maithri Aquatech	Hyderabad	Naveen Mathur
National Highways Authority of India	New Delhi	Sukhbir Singh Sandhu

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Niti Aayog	New Delhi	Amitabh Kant
Handicrafts and Handlooms Export Corp. of India Ltd	New Delhi	Nirmal Sinha
Employees' Provident Fund Organisation	New Delhi	Sunil Barthwal
National Council of Applied Economic Research	New Delhi	Nandan Nilekani
Indian Medicines Pharmaceutical Corporation Limited	Uttarakhand	Dr Mukesh Kumar
Land Ports Authority of India	New Delhi	Aditya Mishra
Khadi and Village Industry Commission	Mumbai	Vinai Kumar Saxena
Press Information Bureau	New Delhi	Jaideep Bhatnagar
Oil India Limited	Noida	Sushil Chandra Mishra
Engineers India Ltd	New Delhi	R.K. Sabharwal
Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd	Mumbai	Vinod Giri
Numaligarh Refinery	Golaghat, Assam	SK Barua
ASREC (India) Ltd	Mumbai	Girish Sharan Sinha
Tata Communications Ltd	Mumbai	Amur Swaminathan Lakshminarayanan
Tech Mahindra	Pune	C. P. Gurnani
Perigord Asset Holdings	Dublin	Alan Leamy
Adani Ports	Ahmedabad	Karan Adani
Power Grid Corporation of India	Guragaon	R.N. Nayak
Jaiprakash Power Ventures	Singrauli, Madhya Pradesh	Manoj Gaur
Competition Commission of India	New Delhi	Ashok Gupta
Edelweiss Infrastructure Yield Plus		Subahoo Chrodia
Axis Securities	Mumbai	Arun Thukral

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Important Financial & Economy Affairs

Organization	GDP – FY 21	GDP - FY 22
World Bank		7.5 – 12.5%
Fitch Ratings	-	12.8%
NSO	- 8%	

Indian economy to contract by 8% in 2020-21, NSO expects

- The growth in India's real GDP during 2020-21 is estimated at **-8 percent** as compared to the **growth rate of 4.0 per cent in 2019-20**.
- The government had projected a GDP contraction of 7.7 per cent in its first advance estimate.

GST collections up by 7 % to Rs 1.13 lakh cr in Feb

- The gross **GST revenue** collected in the month of February is **one lakh 13 thousand 143 crore rupees**.
- Finance Ministry said, out of this amount, CGST is 21 thousand 92 crore rupees, SGST is 27 thousand 273 crore, IGST is 55 thousand 253 crore and Cess is 9,525 crore rupees.
- The government has settled 22 thousand 398 crore rupees to CGST and 17 thousand 534 crore to SGST from IGST as regular settlement.
- In addition, the Centre has also settled 48 thousand crore rupees as IGST ad-hoc settlement in the **ratio of 50:50** between Centre and States and UTs.
- The total revenue of Centre and the States after regular settlement and ad-hoc settlement in February was 67 thousand 490 crore rupees for CGST and 68 thousand 807 crore for the SGST.

India bags highest ever FDIs of over 67 bn US dollars for first nine months of current fiscal

- India received the highest ever **Foreign Direct Investments** of over 67 billion US dollars for the **first nine months of a financial year, last year**.
- During the period of **April to December 2020**, FDI equity inflow **grew by 40 percent** as compared to the corresponding period in the last financial year.
- As per Ministry of Commerce & Industry, these trends are an endorsement of India's status as a preferred investment destination amongst global investors.
- Measures being taken by the Government on the fronts of policy reforms, investment facilitation and ease of doing business have resulted in tremendous FDI inflows into the country.

Cabinet gives nod to amendments in Insurance Act to Increase FDI Limit to 74%

- The **Union Cabinet** has approved to **increase the foreign direct investment (FDI) limit to 74 percent**.
- **Currently**, the **permissible FDI limit** in life and general insurance stands at **49 percent** with ownership and management control with Indian.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

- The Cabinet has approval for amendments in the **Insurance Act, 1938**
- The decision regarding increasing the FDI was taken during **Budget 2021 on February 1**.
- In **2015** the government hiked the **FDI cap** in the insurance sector from **26 percent to 49 percent**.

Benefits :

- The new structure allows a **majority of directors on the board and management to be resident Indians**.
- Allow foreign ownership
- Control with safeguards
- Increase in FDI will help **improve life insurance penetration in the country**.

About FDI :

- A foreign direct investment (FDI) is an investment in the form of a **controlling ownership** in a business in one country by an entity based in another country
- It is thus distinguished from a foreign portfolio investment by a notion of direct control.
- In India Foreign investment was introduced in 1991 under **Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA)**, driven by then **finance minister Manmohan Singh**.

February WPI inflation rises to 4.17 per cent

- The **wholesale price-based inflation rose to 4.17 percent to hit 27 month high in February** this year.
- The **Commerce and Industry Ministry data release** showed that WPI rose mainly due to rise in food, fuel and manufactured goods prices.
- As compared to January this year, provisional food prices were up by 3.31 percent and manufactured products rose 5.81 percent in the reported month. WPI stood at 2.03 percent in January this year while rose to 2.26 percent in the same month last year.
- Retail inflation also climbed to a **three-month high of 5.03 in February this year**.

About Wholesale price index:

- The **Wholesale Price Index** is the price of a representative basket of wholesale goods.
- Some countries use **WPI changes** as a central measure of inflation.
- But now India has adopted a new CPI to measure inflation.
- However, the United States now reports a producer price index instead.
- The WPI is **published by** the Economic Adviser in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- The Wholesale Price Index **focuses on** the price of goods traded between corporations, rather than the goods bought by consumers, which is measured by the Consumer Price Index.
- Wholesale Price Index, or **WPI, measures** the changes in the prices of goods sold and traded in bulk by wholesale businesses to other businesses.
- WPI is unlike the **Consumer Price Index (CPI), which tracks** the prices of goods and services purchased by consumers.

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I-T refunds of over Rs 2 lakh crore issued - FY21

- The **Income Tax Department** said it has issued over 2 lakh crore rupees worth refunds to more than 2.1 crore taxpayers so far this fiscal.
- Of this, personal income tax refunds of 73,607 crore rupees have been issued to over 2.06 crore taxpayers and corporate tax refunds of over 1.3 lakh crore rupees issued in 2.2 lakh cases.

Income tax refund:

- When your **income tax paid** is more than your income tax liability for a given year, the excess amount paid is refunded by the Income tax department.
- This refunded amount is known as **“Income tax refund”**

Fitch Ratings estimates India's growth to 12.8% for next fiscal

- **American credit rating agency Fitch** has revised **India's GDP** growth estimate to **12.8%** for **next fiscal** from the previous 11% on the back of a stronger carryover effect, a looser fiscal stance, and better virus containment.
- The ratings agency, in its **latest Global Economic Outlook GEO**, anticipates the level of the country's GDP to remain well below its pre-pandemic forecast trajectory.
- Fitch also expects GDP growth to ease to **5.8% in Fiscal Year 2023**.
- In a report it said, India's recovery from the depths of the lockdown-induced recession in the second quarter of 2020 has been swifter than expected.
- GDP surpassed its pre-pandemic level in the fourth quarter of the current fiscal.
- It also added that High-frequency indicators point to a **strong start to 2021**.

India real GDP growth to be 7.5 to 12.5 per cent: World Bank

- **India's economy** has bounced back amazingly from the **COVID-19 pandemic and nationwide lockdown** over the last one year, but it is not out of the woods yet, according to the World Bank, which in its latest report has predicted that the **country's real GDP growth for fiscal year 21/22** could range from 7.5 to 12.5 per cent.
- The **Washington-based global lender**, in its latest **South Asia Economic Focus report** released ahead of the **annual spring meeting of the World Bank** and the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**, said that the economy was already slowing when the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded.

Important Business News

Principal Scientific Adviser of GOI launched Swachhta Saarthi Fellowship

- Announcing the fellowships, **Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India, Prof. K. Vijay Raghavan** said, India is a diverse cultural wonder with our practices and lifestyle being confronted by many environmental challenges.
- The Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India under its Waste to Wealth Mission has launched the **Swachhta Saarthi Fellowship** to recognize students, community workers or **Self-Help Groups, SHGs**

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and municipal or sanitary workers who are engaged in tackling the enormous challenge of waste management, scientifically and sustainably.

- The Waste to Wealth Mission is one of the nine national missions of the **Prime Minister's Science, Technology, and Innovation Advisory Council, PM-STIAC**.
- Targeted to encourage community participation, the **Swachhta Saarthi Fellowships** invites applications from students and community workers who have done previous work or are currently engaged in waste management activities, including awareness campaigns, surveys and studies.
- There are **three categories** of awards under the fellowships.
- **Category-A** is Open to School students from 9th to 12th Standards engaged in waste management community work, **Category-B** is Open to College students (UG, PG, Research Students) engaged in waste management community work and **Category-C** is open to citizens working in the community and through SHGs, municipal or sanitary workers working beyond specifications of their job requirement or deions.

AFI, Verraton launched new layer of security for online transactions

- **Academy of Fraud Investigations** along with Consult Verraton have developed **Trayambak**, a solution to prevent ATM, online banking and **PoS (point of sale)** frauds.
- Trayambak will add another layer of security for all ATM, online banking and PoS transactions.

Cashfree partners with PayPal for global payment solution

- Homegrown **payments** and banking technology company, **Cashfree** on announced its **partnership with PayPal** to enable **international payments** for merchants.
- Cashfree Payment Solutions is a Payment Gateway.
- It can Collect local and international payments with a simple integration.

Amazon changes its app icon

- **E-commerce Company Amazon** has renewed its **iOS and Android app icon** again.
- According to Mashable, a month ago, the company introduced a new icon for its mobile apps, replacing the old 'shopping cart' icon with one that combined Amazon's smile logo and a blue adhesive tape strip on a brown background, as a nod to Amazon's shipping boxes.
- The **problem** with that design, apparently, was that the adhesive tape strip looked a **bit too much like the moustache of Adolf Hitler**, which was noticed on social media.
- The new design is very similar, but the adhesive tape strip has been redesigned to look nothing like a moustache.

Hershey launches special chocolate edition

- **Dr. Kriti Bharti**, a rehabilitation psychologist from Jodhpur and managing trustee of **Sarathi Trust** was inducted into the unique **Har-She campaign** of world-renowned chocolate company Hershey for **International Women's Day**.
- The company launched a special edition of chocolate with the '**Har-She Rises**' title in the campaign in which the picture of Dr. Bharti was carved on the chocolate front cover.

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- Dr Kriti Bharati who runs an NGO, the Saarthi Trust, is now helping to annul many child marriages in Rajasthan

Magma HDI General Insurance gave nod to capital raise of up to Rs.250 crore

- **Magma HDI General Insurance Company Ltd**, the insurance JV of Magma Fincorp Ltd, has **approved capital raise of up to Rs.250 crore** by way of **preferential issue to third party investors**.
- Pursuant to the above preferential allotment, the shareholding of the company will get reduced from the current 29.3 per cent to 24.2 per cent.
- The fund-raising plan would be subject to requisite statutory and regulatory approvals.

Magma insurance:

- Magma HDI General Insurance Co Ltd. is a joint venture between Magma Fincorp Ltd, Kolkata and HDI Global SE Germany.
- Vision is to be the most preferred, vibrant, and responsible general insurance company, fulfilling the aspirations of all its stakeholders.

US to become India's second biggest oil supplier

- The **United States has surpasses Saudi Arabia** as **India's second biggest oil supplier**.
- The overall import of India from the United States rose 48 percent to a record 545,300 barrels per day (bpd) in February 2021 compared to January 2021.
- In contrast, the imports from Saudi Arabia in February 2021 fell by 42 percent compared to January 2021, to a decade-low of 445,200 bpd.
- Saudi Arabia has consistently been one of India's top two suppliers, but unfortunately slipped to **No. 4 position for the first time since at least January 2006**.
- Iraq continued to be the top oil supplier to India despite a 23 percent decline in purchases to a five-month low of 867,500 bpd.

Indian chemicals and petrochemicals industry growing to new heights

- **Union Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers D.V. Sadananda Gowda** has said that the Indian chemicals and petrochemicals industry is growing to new heights and an investment of **8 lakh crore rupees** is anticipated in the sector by 2025.
- Mr Gowda said this while inaugurating the 11th Edition of India Chem 2021 in New Delhi with the **theme 'India: Global Manufacturing hub for chemicals and petrochemicals'**.
- The Minister added that the growth in the chemical and petrochemicals industry is also contributing to the Prime Minister's vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat.
- He informed that the Government has launched 12 Production Linked Incentive- PLI schemes for different sectors which will directly or indirectly benefit the chemicals sector.
- He also stated that the Government is prioritising the sector and in the Budget 2021-21, the import duty on Naphtha has been reduced from **4 per cent to 2.5 per cent**.

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- Secretary, Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals, Yogendra Tripathi said that India is emerging as one of the fastest-growing economies in the world.
- He also highlighted the various factors such as development of industrial corridors, commitments in the National Infrastructure Pipeline, competitive wages rates which will give India a competitive advantage.

Country's economy witnessing 'V' shaped recovery: MoS Anurag Thakur

- **Minister of State for Finance Anurag Thakur** said, due to better planning under the leadership of **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, the country's economy is witnessing a **'V' shaped recovery**.
- He said this is achieved while meeting the welfare and security measures in the toughest times triggered due to Covid pandemic and border turbulence.
- Replying to a discussion on the second batch of supplementary demands for grants for 2020-21, the Minister said, while strengthening the border infrastructure and personnel with bullet proof jackets and fighter jets like Rafales to secure the borders, the government also took several welfare measures under the **PM Garib Kalyan Yojana**.
- He said, **Rs. 35,000 Crore** have been allocated for the **fight against Covid pandemic**.
- Mr. Thakur also said, over Nine Crore farmers were disbursed with Rs. 18,000 crore during the covid pandemic.
- **'V' shaped recovery:**
- In a **V-shaped recession**, the economy suffers a sharp but brief period of economic decline with a clearly defined trough, followed by a strong recovery.
- **V-shapes are the normal shape** for a recession, as the strength of the economic recovery is typically closely related to the severity of the preceding recession.

India contribute 2nd batch of 20,000 litres of Malathion 95% ULV pesticide to Iran

- India has supplied a second batch of **20 thousand litres of Malathion 95 percent ULV pesticide to Iran** under a Government-to-Government **Locust Control Programme**.
- The consignment reached Chabahar Port and was handed over to the Plant Protection Organization, Iran.
- The External Affairs Ministry said India had approached Iran and Pakistan for a coordinated regional response to the threat to approaching swarms of desert locusts.
- It was in this context that Iran had requested the supply of pesticides.
- There was no response from Pakistan.
- India supplied the first tranche of **20 thousand litres of Malathion to Iran in June last year**.
- The **second tranche of 20,000 litres for Iran has been handed over**.

About ULV:

- **Ultra-low-volume (ULV)** is a method for the application of a minimum volume of liquid insecticide formulation (**usually less than 500 ml/he**) per unit area, which provides maximum efficiency in killing target vectors.
- **ULV TREATMENT** When the mosquitoes in flight come into contact with the chemical droplets floating in the air, they will be killed.

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- Cold fogging is sometimes called **Ultra Low Volume (ULV) treatment** as it allows the utilization of only a very small amount of chemical for coverage of a large area.

Maruti Suzuki India shortlists three new startups by innovation initiative

- **Maruti Suzuki India (MSI)** said it has shortlisted three new startups as part of its **Mobility and Automobile Innovation Lab (MAIL)** programme.
- With an objective to promote innovation in the mobility space, the auto major said it has shortlisted **Nable IT, Redbot and Sleeve** as part of the fourth cohort of the MAIL programme.
- "The startups are poised to disrupt the consumer technology world.
- The company's MAIL initiative supports them by co-creating innovative business solutions," **MSI MD and CEO Kenichi Ayukawa** said in a statement.
- The three new startups will now engage with the company for paid projects, he added.
- MSI had launched the MAIL initiative in partnership with GHV Accelerator in January 2019.

Adani Green Energy buys 50 MW solar power project in Canada's SkyPower Global

- **Adani Green Energy Limited (AGEL)** said it has signed a share purchase agreement for acquiring **100% stake** in a special purpose vehicle (SPV) holding **50 MW operating solar project from Toronto-based SkyPower Global**.
- The project located in Telangana was commissioned in October 2017 and has a long-term **Power Purchase Agreement (PPA)** with the Southern Power Distribution Company of Telangana.
- The acquisition helps AGEL raise its operating renewable capacity to **3,395 MW** with a total renewable portfolio of 14,865 MW including under-construction and awarded projects.

India supplies two Mobile Harbour Cranes - weighing 100 tons to Iran

- India supplied **two Mobile Harbour Cranes (MHCs)** each weighing **100 tons to Iran**.
- Indian Embassy in Iran said it is part of India's continued commitment towards **development of phase-I of Shahid Beheshti port in Chabahar**.
- This is the second such consignment of equipment shipped to the strategic port at Chah Bahar.
- India had earlier supplied **two 140-ton MHCs in January this year**.
- **Shipping Minister Mansukh Mandaviya** said, the step is continuing with India's commitment to develop Chabahar Port.

BSNL - launch 4G with a Rs.1,000-cr investment

- State-owned telecom firm **Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd (BSNL)** can launch **4G services**, a key requirement for its revival, with an investment of about **Rs.1,000 crore** against the estimated **Rs.9,000 crore** it would require as per the new tender.
- BSNL had its network 4G-ready with an investment of **Rs.6,000 crore in 2018**, while the government allotted spectrum in October 2019.

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- However, the firm is yet to launch the services. According to SNEA, BSNL should immediately avail the **5 MHz of 4G spectrum** allotted to it and provide both 4G and 3G services.

Mi India giving out one-time hardship bonus to 1,200 employees

- **Manu Kumar Jain, Managing Director of Mi India**, is giving out **one-time hardship bonus** to 1,200 of its corporate employees for roughing out a very tough, **pandemic-struck** year, 2020.
- The company currently has **60,000 direct as well as indirect employees**.
- India Managing Director Manu Kumar Jain said the smartphone maker will make all efforts to ensure that all its staffers and their family members take the coronavirus vaccine as per the eligibility criteria.

JLR inaugurates its first all-electric SUV

- The **I-PACE is a Jaguar vehicle** above all else—a **true driver's car**.
- Its electric motors and near-perfect weight distribution **deliver 512 lb-ft** of instant torque and sports car agility.
- Luxury carmaker **Jaguar Land Rover (JLR)** launched its first electric car in India—the **Jaguar I-PACE—at a starting price of Rs 1.6 crore**.
- The launch took place a month after JLR, which is owned by the Tata Group, had announced that all Jaguar models and 60 per cent of Land Rovers sold will be zero-emissions vehicles by 2030.
- The I-PACE is powered by a 90 kWh lithium-ion battery delivering **294 kW power and 696 Nm torque**, allowing the electric car to accelerate from 0-100 km/hour in just 4.8 seconds.
- As for the driving range, the I-Pace claims a range of 470 km/full charge.

WhatsApp: CCI orders probe into new privacy policy

- The **Competition Commission of India** ordered a probe into the new privacy policy of WhatsApp.
- In a **Suo-Motu** order on the **Updated Terms of Service and Privacy Policy for WhatsApp Users** the Anti-trust Watchdog said that WhatsApp has prima facie contravened the **Competition Act, 2000**.
- The order says that **WhatsApp through its exploitative and exclusionary conduct**, in the garb of policy update violated the provisions of **Section 4 of the act**.
- It added that the conduct of WhatsApp in sharing of users' personalized data with other Facebook Companies, in a manner that is neither fully transparent nor based on voluntary and specific user consent, appears prima facie unfair to users.

Biocon Pharma partners with Libbs Farmaceutica - for launch generic formulations in Brazil

- **Biocon Ltd**, an **innovation-led global biopharma company**, has announced a partnership between **Biocon Pharma Limited**, a wholly owned subsidiary of Biocon Limited, and **Libbs Farmaceutica**, a pharmaceuticals company in Brazil, to launch generic drugs in Brazil, the **world's sixth most populous country**.

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- In a regulatory filing to exchanges, the company said, “**The partnership, which marks the entry of Biocon’s generic formulations into Latin America, builds upon a successful association with Libbs, which began in 2017 to launch biosimilar Trastuzumab in Brazil.**
- It reflects Biocon’s commitment to make affordable healthcare accessible for patients the world over, by establishing a strong global presence for its formulations portfolio, either directly or through strategic partnerships.”

ABOUT BIOCON:

- **Biocon ranked among top 5 global biotech employers for 2020**
- Abhijit Zutshi, Commercial Head, Global Generics, added, “The partnership with Libbs further builds on Biocon’s ability to forward integrate its portfolio of complex and differentiated APIs into finished dosages.
- The resultant quality, safety and cost advantages, coupled with reliability of supply, give us a distinct competitive edge as we enter new markets.”

Recent news about BIOCON:

- **Biocon Biologics appoints Susheel Umesh as Chief Commercial Officer for emerging markets**
- As part of the **out-licensing deal with Libbs, Biocon Pharma** will be responsible for drug development and manufacturing, while Libbs will leverage its deep expertise and reach in Brazil to import, distribute and market, subject to approvals from the **Brazilian health regulatory agency, ANVISA.**
- **Siddharth Mittal, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, Biocon Ltd,** said, “Expanding our association with Libbs Farmaceutica, a trusted partner, to our generic formulations, will help us establish a **firm footing in Latin America, starting with Brazil.**
- We remain committed to expanding our global presence with high quality and affordable medicines and invest in strengthening capabilities that enable us to serve patients globally.”

Delhi court appoints Local Commissioner (LC) to oversee sealing of advocate Mehmood Pracha's computer

- A **Delhi court appointed a Local Commissioner (LC)** to oversee the sealing of advocate **Mehmood Pracha's computer** in a case of alleged tutoring of a witness in connection with the northeast Delhi riots.
- The court directed the official to coordinate with him a visit to **Mehmood Pracha's office.**
- The sessions court will now hear the matter on April 28.
- The court's order came after **Special Public Prosecutor Amit Prasad** did not object to Pracha’s proposal to appoint an LC.
- **Additional Sessions Judge Dharmender Rana** directed the **Investigating Officer (IO)** to go to Pracha’s office and seize and seal the computer.
- It directed that the entire procedure be videographed in the presence of advocate Avneet Kaur who was **appointed as the Local Commissioner.**

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Govt gain multiple Eoi for privatisation of Neelachal Ispat Nigam Ltd

- **Government** has received multiple expressions of interest for privatisation of **Neelachal Ispat Nigam Ltd (NINL)**.
- In a tweet, Secretary, Department of Investment and Public Asset Management, Tuhin Kanta Pandey said the transaction moves ahead to the second stage, on schedule.
- Earlier, the government had invited bids to privatise NINL seeking to divest 93.7 per cent stake held by four central public sector enterprises and two Odisha government PSUs.
- In January last year, **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs** had given in principle approval for strategic disinvestment of equity shareholding of Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation Limited, National Mineral Development Corporation, MECON and Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd as well as two Odisha State Government PSUs in Neelachal Ispat Nigam Limited to a strategic buyer identified through a two-stage auction procedure.

Important State Wise News

List of Festivals

Festivals	Place
Herath	Jammu & Kashmir
Tulip Garden Festival	Srinagar
Attukal Pongala Festival	Kerala

Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Jal Jeevan Mission: Andaman & Nicobar achieved 100% Functional Household Tap Connection coverage

- **Andaman and Nicobar Islands Lt. Governor Admiral D K Joshi** declared that the UT achieved 100 percent Functional Household Tap Connection (FHTC) coverage in Islands.
- He said that in a function at Raj Niwas in Port Blair on **World water day**.
- With this, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands becomes the third state/UT in the country to achieve the target after Goa and Telangana under **Jal Jeevan Mission**.
- The connections were provided at 266 villages located in 9 blocks in all the three districts.
- **All the schools, Anganwadi centers and sub-centers** have also been covered under this.
- The Chief Secretary Jitendra Narain said that this achievement is the result of contribution and co-ordination of various departments of A&N Administration working under the mission.
- He also informed that administration is also planning to transform Jal Shakti Mission into a People's Mission.
- Under the mission, the administration is planning to have a pond with a fish at every household in the islands besides water harvesting.

Andhra Pradesh

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Andhra Pradesh CM launches AP Fact Check website and Twitter account

- **Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S .Jagan Mohan Reddy** has launched the **AP Fact Check website and Twitter account at his camp office.**
- The Chief Minister said that with malicious propaganda spread in the media and on social media, the State Government has launched the website in a bid to curb such false news.
- He directed the authorities to take action against such half-truths.
- He stressed on the need to identify where these campaigns originate and take legal action.
- He said no one should spread misinformation to mislead people about the welfare schemes that the Government is taking seriously, and also about the institutions involved.

Andhra Pradesh CM unveiled Kurnool Airport

- The **Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy** has inaugurated the **Kurnool Airport located at Orvakal** and named it after the **first ever freedom fighter** of the country, **Uyyalavada Narasimha Reddy, as a tribute to him.**
- While addressing the gathering at Kurnool, the CM has said that the flight operations from the airport will commence from March, 28th servicing to **Bengaluru, Visakhapatnam, and Chennai routes.**
- He stated that the Airport is equipped with all the latest technology, fine infrastructure which can facilitate parking for four aircrafts at the same time.
- Stating that this will be the sixth civilian airport in the State after Visakhapatnam, Tirupati, Vijayawada, Rajahmundry and Kadapa.
- Jagan Mohan Reddy also said that the airport has been set up in the judicial Capital of Andhra Pradesh, connecting to other States.
- He later said that the airport will make the judicial capital stand on par with other States.

Bihar

Bihar - first state to have Ethanol Promotion Policy

- **Bihar** has become the **first state** of the country to have its own ethanol policy called **Ethanol Production Promotion Policy, 2021.**
- The Policy was approved by the Central government in December 2020 in consonance with National Policy of Biofuels, 2018 and subsequently by **National Biofuel Co-ordination Committee.**
- The ethanol promotion policy would pave the way for making Bihar an ethanol hub and investors' coveted destination.
- The policy would allow investors to directly make ethanol from maize, molasses, broken rice and rotten grains, which was restricted to sugarcane till now.

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Bihar: 10 croreth Ayushman card handed over to a beneficiary

- **Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana** has registered a landmark achievement with the issuing of **ten crore cards to a resident of Bihar**.
- A **25 year old Irfan Ali** from **Gopalganj district** has received this card.
- This landmark achievement is a result of the **Aapke Dwar Ayushman campaign** which was launched to **spread awareness among the beneficiaries**.
- Under the scheme, any family can avail free medical benefits **upto 5 lakh rupees per year**.
- **CEO of Ayushman Bharat, Dr. Ram Sewak Sharma** termed this a great achievement saying that 10th crore Ayushman card has been issued to a beneficiary in Gopalganj district in Bihar.
- He expressed happiness over the adding of lakhs of new beneficiaries under **AapkeDwarAyushman** initiative.
- He said targets have been set to take the number of identified beneficiaries to at least 20 crore next financial year.

Delhi

India's biggest Kidney Dialysis Hospital inaugurated in Delhi at Balasahib Gurudwara

- India's biggest **Kidney Dialysis Hospital** was inaugurated at **Balrasahib Gurudwara** in Delhi.
- The **Guru Harikshan Institute of Medical Sciences and Research Kidney Dialysis Hospital** has been opened by Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee.
- The 100 bedded hospital is equipped with most technically advanced medical facilities where services will be provided free of cost to the patients.
- There will also be no billing counter at the hospital.

Haryana

Govt College for Women at Salaheri renamed as Shaheed Lieutenant Kiran Shekhawat Government College for Women in Haryana

- In **Haryana**, **Government College for Women at Salaheri** in Nuh district has been renamed as **Shaheed Lieutenant Kiran Shekhawat Government College for Women, Salaheri**.
- This was informed by Haryana Education Minister, Kanwar Pal during the Question Hour during the Budget session of the Vidhan Sabha.
- He further added that Yasin Meo Degree College in Nuh has 1,108 students.

Haryana CM dedicates various development projects to people

- **Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal** inaugurated and dedicated various development **projects worth Rs. 1411 crore** to the people of the State through video conference from Chandigarh.
- CM in a state level virtual programme inaugurated and laid foundation stones of as many as **163 projects pertaining to Education, Health, Sports, Roads Water, Power etc. in 22 districts**.

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- This includes inauguration of **80 projects worth Rs. 475 crore** and laying foundation stones of 83 projects worth Rs. 935 crore.

Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh

J&K: 2-day long 6th Technology Exhibition cum Seed Sale Mela Inaugurated by LG Manoj Sinha

- In the Union Territory of **Jammu and Kashmir**, **Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha** who is also the Chancellor of Sher-i-Kashmir University of Agriculture Science and Technology Kashmir (SKUAST-Kashmir) inaugurated a 2-day long 6th Technology Exhibition cum Seed Sale Mela on the theme **“Shaping the Future Farming for Better Returns”** at Shalimar campus of the University in Srinagar.
- The Lt. Governor inspected around 200 stalls showcasing a variety of products and technologies developed in the field of Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry, Fisheries, Agroforestry, Agri-Engineering, and other related fields.

PM Jan Aushadhi Kendra inaugurated at District Hospital, Kargil

- In Ladakh, Councillor (Town) LAHDC, Kargil Haji Mohammad Abass Adulpa inaugurated a **Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi Kendra at District Hospital, Kargil** to celebrate the **Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi Diwas-2021**.
- Haji Abass purchased medicine from the centre in which all types of **Generic Medicines** will be available at lesser price.
- Haji Abass said that considerable progress has been made, but a lot more needs to be done for improving facilities for patients in government hospitals.
- He said that these stores would have a great impact on the lives of people by providing them quality medicines at affordable prices.
- **RMO Dr Shabir Hussain** briefed about the importance for the Scheme and urged the people to take maximum benefits from the Jan Aushadhi Store.
- A free Medical Check-up Camp was also organised at this juncture.

Ladakh villages: Merak and Khakted get mobile connectivity

- In the eastern **Ladakh region**, **zero border villages** are now getting better connectivity by all means.
- **Opposite to much discussed finger four, Merak and Khakted villages on the southern side of Pangong Tso got mobile connectivity.**
- As things are easing, under operation Sadbhavana, the Army laid OFC cable to fulfill the decades dream of the villagers to have mobile connectivity.
- As BSNL provided the equipment and Chuchul Councillor Konchok Stanzin provided **solar power systems to the project.**
- Konchok Stanzin said army and border villagers are symbiotic and complement each other in need.

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- Moreover as the situation is easing with disengagement at Line of Actual Control and with vaccination program on covid pandemic front, the stalled developmental activities are expected to take off this season in Chuchul and Changthang regions.

Separate cell for National Commission for Women commissioned in Ladakh, J&K

- **Newly formed Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir Union Territories** will have a separate cell in **National Commission for Women (NCW)**.
- The Commission's Chairperson **Rekha Sharma** said that by the end of this month, separate cells for the new UTs will be created.
- Four days ahead of International Women's Day, Ladakh became the launching pad for the first-ever online training programme Empowering Women through Entrepreneurship.
- **In collaboration with IIM, Bangalore and India SME Forum**, the Commission is providing online training to five thousand women entrepreneurs from across the country.
- Chairperson Rekha Sharma said that NCW chose Ladakh for the occasion, to involve the women in the journey of development.

J&K: 5500 hectares of high-density plantation scheme in horticulture sector

- The **Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Council** under the chairmanship of **Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha** has approved the **implementation of high-density plantation scheme in the horticulture sector** with the support of **National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd (NAFED)**.
- The step will go a long way in enhancing the quality and quantity of horticulture produce and doubling the farmer's income.
- The farmer-centric scheme will be implemented for apple, walnut, almond, cherry, litchi, and olive among others over an estimated area of **5500 hectares** of suitable **agro-climatic zones** for **6 years** with effect from **March 2021 to March 2026**.
- **About the scheme:**
- The new scheme has provisions to **provide 50 percent subsidy** to orchardists for the establishment of **high-density orchards** accompanied by a loan facility for **raising 40 percent of remaining capital**.
- Besides, the scheme will also provide subsidies to growers on account of expenditure related to micro-irrigation, plant material, and anti-hail nets.
- **Under the scheme**, preference will be given to farmers with landholdings of less than 4 kanal.

J&K govt sanctions interest-free loan worth two lakh rupees for PMAY-U beneficiaries

- **Jammu and Kashmir government** has approved a proposal to provide interest-free loan up to 2 lakh rupees to the urban homeless economically weaker section beneficiaries under Beneficiary Led Construction (BLC) component of the **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U)**.

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- J&K Administrative Council, which met under the chairmanship of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, approved the proposal of the Housing and Urban Development Department.
- The beneficiaries under the BLC component of PMAY-U have experienced the difficulty in mobilising their contribution as they come from economically weaker sections.
- As a result of which the construction of dwelling units under this component of PMAY-U could not achieve the desired targets.
- The beneficiaries of this component have demanded enhancement of assistance in their favour so that they can complete their houses within the targeted date of the mission.

About The scheme PMAY-U:

- **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana** is an initiative by the Government of India in which affordable housing will be provided to the urban poor with a target of building **20 million affordable houses** by **31 March 2022**.
- **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban (PMAY-U)**, a flagship Mission of Government of India being implemented by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), was launched on 25th June 2015.
- The Mission addresses urban housing shortage among the EWS/LIG and MIG categories including the slum dwellers by ensuring a pucca house to all eligible urban households by the year 2022, when Nation completes 75 years of its Independence.

J&K celebrates festival of Shivratri 'Herath'

- The Union Territory of **Jammu and Kashmir**, Celebrates the festival of **Shivratri 'Herath'**.
- It is a **three day festival starting from March 10, 2021 to March 12, 2021**.
- Festival Mahashivratri locally known as Herath in Kashmir is being celebrated across J&K by Kashmiri Pandit Community with religious fervour by offering "**Watak Nath Pooja**".

Purpose :

- This festival symbolizes **the values of devotion and harmony**, which are the hallmarks of glorious tradition & cultural ethos of Jammu and Kashmir.
- The festival assumes colossal importance among the Kashmiri Pandit Community who celebrate it to mark the wedding of "Lord Shiva with Goddess Parvati

Significance of Maha Shivratri

- Maha Shivratri marks the union of Shiva and Shakti.
- Shiva here symbolises Purusha (mindfulness), while Parvati epitomises Prakriti (nature).
- Maha Shivratri was celebrated when the Linga form of Lord Shiva first came into being.

Agriculture Dept of J&K organizes Kisan Mela in Kupwara district

- In the **Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir**, the **Agriculture Department** organized a **day-long Kisan Mela** at the **Agriculture Complex** in Kupwara district.

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- The Agriculture department and allied departments installed their stalls to showcase machinery and high yielding variety seeds.
- The Mela was organized as a part of 'Aazadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' and was attended by hundreds of progressive farmers of the district.
- The **District Development Commissioner Kupwara, Imam Din** in his address said that the objective of holding such a farmer awareness programme is to transform the knowledge bank of agriculture scientists and farm experts to the field so that the ambitious programme of Government of India to double the income of farmer community is achieved by the **target period of 2022**.
- The **DDC directed the Agriculture Department** to hold such programmes in every part of the district and simultaneously advised farmers to take advantage of the new and innovative techniques of Agriculture Farming to yield better results at ground level

About Kisan Mela:

- **Krishi Unnati Mela** is a three-day event launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on **19 March 2016 in Delhi**.
- **Objective:** The objective of the fair is to create awareness among farmers about the latest agriculture-related technological developments.
- **Kisan mela** is organized twice in every year by **State/Central Agricultural Universities**, one each in Kharif and Rabi season.

Urban Forest Division of Srinagar observes Chinar Day

- In the **Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir**, the **Urban Forest Division Srinagar** organized a programme to observe **Chinar Day** at **Shuhama Campus of Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST)** where the Chinar saplings were planted within the premises.
- **Conservator of Forests Srinagar, Zubair Ahmad Shah** said that we have assembled to celebrate Chinar Day and exchange the ideas about this Heritage Tree.
- Without Chinar, the landscape of Kashmir is incomplete.
- While divulging into the details, he said that the department currently is planting about 2000 Chinar saplings besides twelve thousand five hundred more Chinar saplings shall be planted during the year.
- Mr Shah added that it is our conscious effort to preserve this heritage and shall grow more and more Chinars as it enhances the beauty of Kashmir besides providing gallons of oxygen to our atmosphere and helping in the maintenance of the environment.

About Chinar:

- Their botanical **name** is **Platanus orientalis**.
- They have been an important part of Kashmiri tradition, in that, a **Chinar tree** is found in almost every village in Kashmir.
- These **trees** have survived for ages, because **Chinar** is basically a long-living tree.

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- *Platanus orientalis*, the **Old World sycamore or Oriental plane**, is a large, deciduous tree of the *Platanaceae* family, growing to 30 m or more, and known for its longevity and spreading crown.
- In fall its deep green leaves may change to blood red, amber, and yellow.

J&K: "Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan" programme held at Budgam

- In the **Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir**, a day-long "Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan" programme was held at **Budgam**.
- The event was inaugurated by **District Development Commissioner Shahbaz Ahmad Mirza** and was jointly organized by the **Social Welfare Department and District Administration in collaboration with the Department of Health and many NGOs**.
- The DDC noted that relentless efforts and commitment is required to take the **Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan, a result oriented campaign**.
- He said rigorous mass awareness at all levels to spread the message among common people is needed for the hour, as this is a complicated problem which requires serious steps at the right time to curb it.
- He said drug addiction has the capacity of devastating the future of our young generation.
- He said that we jointly have to share the responsibility in keeping vigil at our wards and their close ones to prevent them from getting into this menace.

J&K: LG Manoj Sinha inaugurates project "Awaam Ki Baat"

- In the **Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir**, **Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha**, initiated the project "**Awaam Ki Baat**" - a **Radio program** by launching its website at Raj Bhavan, Jammu.
- The **half-an-hour long Radio program** to be aired every third Sunday of the month (to start from April), is one of the many sequential steps of broader program aimed at disseminating the progressive steps taken by the government and providing the public with a platform to speak, write and interact with the administration, thereby voicing their suggestions, ideas and creative proposals.

About Awaam Ki Baat:

- **Awaam Ki Baat** is the **novel initiative** of the **Office of the Lieutenant Governor, Jammu and Kashmir** which aims at disseminating the progressive steps taken by the administration and seeks public feedback to make the process interactive, participative and people centric.
- The platform appreciates the **heterogeneity** of our Union Territory.

'Kaushal Mela' organized by Dept of Technical Education & Skill development in Kargil

- In **Kargil** the department of **Technical Education and Skill development** is organizing **Kaushal Mela** as part of the skill development programme of the government of India.
- This Kaushal Mehla will be organized under **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)** on **March 24** and in **Leh** on **27th of March**.

About Kaushal & Rozgar Mela:

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- **Social and community mobilisation** is extremely critical for the success of PMKVY.
- Active participation of the community ensures transparency and accountability and helps in leveraging the cumulative knowledge of the community for better functioning.

Asia's largest Tulip Garden in Kashmir opened

- In the **Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir**, **Asia's largest Tulip Garden** in Srinagar is scheduled to be opened for the general public and tourists.
- The Tulip Garden in Srinagar is a spectrum of colours featuring lakhs of tulips which have blossomed in the lap of **Zabarwan Hills** along the banks of **world famous Dal Lake** in Srinagar city.
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** in his tweet has urged the people to visit Jammu and Kashmir and enjoy the scenic **Tulip Garden Festival in Srinagar** where **15 lakh flowers** of more than **64 varieties** are in full bloom nowadays.
- Mr Modi has also not missed to convey the hospitality of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Ladakh LG launches first Solar Lift Irrigation Scheme of KREDA at Lato Village

- **Ladakh Lieutenant Governor R K Mathur** has inaugurated the **first Solar Lift Irrigation Scheme of Kargil Renewable Energy Development Agency (KREDA)** at Lato Village.
- This is the last Village on the LOC.
- The project is inspired by the Vision of the **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** for solarising Ladakh as a model region by making it fully solarised and Carbon Neutral.
- The agency has successfully installed and Commissioned a **41 Hp Submersible Pump** backed with 50 Kw Solar Photovoltaic Plant making the first prototype of the **Solar Lift Irrigation System in Ladakh** in coloration with Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council Kargil.
- Mr.Mathur said, after preliminary analyses which will be completed in a week, it will be a model and it can be replicated in most parts of Ladakh without any running cost.

73 AYUSH Health & Wellness Centres e-inaugurates in J&K by Lieutenant Governor

- In the **Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir**, with the aim of promoting good health and expanding the outreach of comprehensive primary healthcare services to the people of **J&K**, **Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha** e-inaugurated as many as **73 AYUSH Health & Wellness Centres under Ayushman Bharat across the UT**.
- The LG observed that healthcare services in J&K witnessed a revolutionary transformation in the past several months and unprecedented work is being done for advancement and upgradation of medical facilities for ensuring quality and affordable healthcare services in the UT.

Principal Secretary initiates 'Pashudhan Mela' in Kathua

- In **Jammu and Kashmir**, **Principal Secretary Animal & Sheep Husbandry Department, Naveen Kumar Chaudhary** has inaugurated '**Pashudhan Mela**' in Kathua.
- A variety of breeds of cattle and buffalo from the neighboring state of Punjab including breeds from Kashmir were put on display.

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- The Principal Secretary said the '**Pashudhan Mela**' is the first of its kind Mela held in the Union Territory organized with the objective to educate farmers about the latest cattle breeds.
- He said **Cattle Mela** will be a regular affair in J&K covering each district in a phased manner.
- He said the **Department of Animal Husbandry** has taken a series of steps to empower farmers and livestock owners to adopt dairy which have huge market demand.
- He appealed to youth to come forward to start their units in dairy farming under **Integrated Dairy Development Scheme (IDDS)** which provides expertise and necessary machinery at subsidized rates.

J&K govt assemble one day awareness programme for farmers

- In the **Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir**, as part of **Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav** celebrations, a one-day awareness programme for farmers was **organized by the Revenue Department at Revenue Training Complex, Jammu.**
- A detailed presentation was given by Regional Director Surveys & Land Records, through which the farmers were informed about the **Digital India Land Records Modernisation Programme, (DILRMP)** under which, an **Integrated Land Information Management System** is being developed across the country, which includes geo-mapping of land and digitization of revenue records.

Jharkhand

Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat: Goa paired with Jharkhand

- Under **Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat** State of Goa is paired with Jharkhand.
- During this COVID Pandemic period, various educational institutions carried out online and offline activities.
- **Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'** campaign has been launched to promote cultural unity among various states of the country.
- **Coastal State Goa** has got rich cultural heritage.
- Before this Pandemic Goa students had visited Jharkhand for a cultural Exchange Programme.

Himachal Pradesh

Himachal Pradesh police to organize 'All Women Parade' for International Women's Day

- On the occasion of **International Women's Day**, **Himachal Pradesh Police Department** will organize '**All Woman Parade**' at the historic Ridge Grounds in Shimla, aimed at increasing the strength of women in the police force.
- The state police will celebrate the Day in two sessions.
- **State governor Bandaru Dattatreya** will be the chief guest in the first session during which the Parade will be held on the Ridge, while the **chief minister Jai Ram Thakur** will be the chief guest during the second session.
- **Himachal Pradesh DGP Sanjay Kundu** said the state Police will hold a series of events on Women's Day.

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- On the occasion, 26 women cop will perform daring bike stunts and musketry drills, which will be a major attraction in the first season.
- An exhibition on the theme, '**Women in HP Police in 50 Years**' would be displayed at Gaiety Theatre at six pm followed by a cultural program during the second session.

Himachal Pradesh CM inaugurates multiple services: e-Office, e-Heli Service, e-Aagman, e-Lahaul for Lahaul-Spiti district

- **Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur** virtually launched **e-Office, e-Heli Service, e-Aagman and e-Lahaul for Lahaul-Spiti district from Shimla**.
- Chief Minister said that all these services would go a long way in providing people friendly services to the people of **Lahaul-Spiti** district on click of button.
- He said that these initiatives were the best examples of optimum use of Information Technology for good governance.
- Information Technology Minister **Dr. Ram Lal Markanda** noted that Lahaul-Spiti would become the first district of the State in effective adopting of e-office in the State.
- It may be recalled that district administration Lahaul & Spiti with the help of Department of Information Technology has been working on many IT initiatives to provide citizen services digitally to the people of tribal district.

Karnataka

Karnataka CM admires Bengaluru for its model of citizen centric initiatives development

- **Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa** has tweeted that **Bengaluru** has emerged as the most livable city in India in the **Ease of living Survey** conducted by the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs**.
- He has said that the Bengaluru model of development of citizen centric initiatives and delivery of services have ensured this top ranking.

Karnataka launches engineering research policy

- The **Karnataka** government has launched the country's maiden **Engineering Research & Development (ER&D) Policy** to **raise its contribution to the sector** in the country to **45%** in the next **five years**.
- The new policy envisages creation of an additional **50,000 jobs**.
- According to industry apex body Nasscom, ER&D has the potential to become a **\$100-billion** industry in the country in the next five years.
- The new policy, drafted jointly by the Department of Electronics, IT, Biotechnology and Science and Technology, Karnataka Innovation and Technology Society, and Nasscom in consultation with industry stakeholders
- It has identified five key focus sectors such as
 1. aerospace and defence;
 2. auto, auto components and EV;
 3. biotechnology, pharma and medical devices;

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4. semiconductors, telecom, ESDM;
 5. software products.
- The policy will also support industrial application of academic research, spend ₹10,000 per student on training and certification as provide grants to universities to set up laboratories.

India's first dedicated express cargo terminal launched in Bengaluru airport

- **The Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru** now has India's first dedicated Express Cargo Terminal exclusively for export and import of international couriers.
- A media release issued by Bangalore International Airport Limited that operates the Bengaluru airport says that the **Chief Commissioner of Customs in Bengaluru zone Mr.M Srinivas inaugurated the Terminal.**
- The two lakh square feet built to suit facility will be operated by Express Industry Council of India. It has a dedicated space for customs offices with direct access to both Landside and Airside wing of the airport.
- The Chief Commissioner M Sirinivas mentioned that the exclusive Terminal for express couriers at south India's busiest Cargo Airport in Bengaluru will enable ease of doing business and reduce transaction time and cost for the shipper.
- The new facility will enable **Bengaluru Airport to process 150,000 Metric Tonnes annually**, taking the **Airport's overall annual cargo capacity to 720,000 MT**, from the **existing 570,000 MT**.

Corporate sector is invited to utilize its CSR funds: Karnataka Health Minister

- **Karnataka Health and Medical Education Minister, Dr. K Sudhakar** has informed that the corporate sector is invited to utilize its CSR funds towards upgrading **2500 Primary Health Centres in the state.**
- He said that a favourable window is created by the Central Government by enforcing a policy to spend **25 percent of CSR funds** in the health sector.
- He said that IT companies that have major presence in the state will be approached to mobilise CSR funds towards upgradation of the Primary Health Centres in the state.
- On measures to contain the pandemic, the minister said that awareness programmes will be planned, testing and vaccination will be increased and strict vigil will be kept on social gatherings especially in closed environments.

About CSR funds:

- **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** is the **funding and grants** process under which Non-Profit Organisations (NGOs) can get financial and other support from the corporate sector.
- Under the **Companies Act, 2013** it is a mandatory provision to provide a contribution of 2 percent of the average net profits of companies.

Kerala

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Devotees of Kerala take part in Attukal pongala festival from their homes

- In Kerala, amid the **Covid-19 pandemic** the devotees will take part in the Attukal pongala from **their homes**.
- **Pongala** is the **annual ritual** of the **Attukal Bhagavathy Temple in Thiruvananthapuram** and holds the Guinness world record as the largest gathering of women.
- Every year nearly 20 lakh devotees take part in the festival.
- However, this time the authorities have decided to scale down the festival rituals by confining the ritual to the temple premises.
- The devotees have been asked to offer the ritual at their homes to avoid crowding.
- Pongala offerings at public places have been banned.

Madhya Pradesh

Madhya Pradesh: 2-day national seminar on NEP and its Implementation concluded

- A two-day national seminar on National Education Policy and its Implementation, organised by **Makhanlal Chaturvedi National University of Journalism and Communication, Bhopal, NITI Aayog and Bharatiya Shikshan Mandal** concluded.
- **State Higher Education Minister Dr Mohan Yadav** said that Universities in Madhya Pradesh will execute NEP from next academic session.
- **General Secretary of Bharatiya Shikshan Mandal Dr Umashankar Pachauri** said that education should unfold the inner knowledge and skills of students.
- The NEP followed this concept. Vice Chancellor Prof. K.G. Suresh said, Indian culture is education and teacher-centric.
- National Education Policy focused on teachers.
- Prof Suresh announced establishment of Human Resource Development Centre (HRDC) in the university and said, MCU will implement the policy from next academic session.

President of India Inaugurates conservation works at Singorgarh Fort in Damoh district (MP)

- The President of India **Shri Ram Nath Kovind** laid the **foundation stone for the conservation works of Singorgarh Fort in Singrapur village of Damoh district in Madhya Pradesh**.
- The President also inaugurated the newly carved **Jabalpur Circle of Archaeological Survey of India**.
- He also addressed the State Level Tribal Conference at Singrapur village in Damoh.
- The program was organized by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India and the Tribal Affairs Department of Madhya Pradesh.

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Madhya Pradesh CM along with Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar launched Mission Gramodaya

- In **Madhya Pradesh**, **Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar** and **Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan** have launched the **Mission Gramodaya** in the state.
- Under the **Gramodaya mission**, besides providing housing facilities in rural areas, basic and fundamental infrastructure will also be expanded.
- Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar while addressing the state-level programme of Gramodaya Mission virtually said that rural development schemes, especially **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna and Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana** are being effectively implemented in Madhya Pradesh.
- Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana construction of 3 lakh houses was completed under the adverse circumstances of the Corona period.
- About 1 lakh 25 thousand beneficiary families of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana were given houses during the programme.

Ministry of Tourism inaugurated Chhatrasal Convention Centre developed under Swadesh Darshan Scheme at Khajuraho

- **Union Minister of State for Tourism and Culture (Independent Charge) Prahlad Singh Patel** and **Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Shivraj Singh Chouhan** inaugurated the 'Chhatrasal Convention Centre at Khajuraho.
- Union minister Prahlad Singh Patel mentioned that we have to develop the **iconic tourism places** in various States of India but simultaneously we will have to conserve our ancient old culture also.
- Central government and state government have to **work together to develop** these new iconic tourism places.
- We all will have to realise our responsibility towards our tourism places accordingly.
- Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan assured full cooperation of the state government in developing all tourism places in the state with the help of the Central Government.
- He also said that under the table guidance of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi development of many tourism places are undergoing in the state.

Maharashtra

Mumbai's CSMT becomes first railway station to get IGBC Gold Certification

- **Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus Railway Station** of **Central Railway** is the **first railway station** in **Maharashtra** to be awarded with Gold certification as per **CII's Indian Green Building Council (IGBC)** ratings.
- The rating system gives impetus to the national priorities like energy efficiency, water conservation, handling of waste measures and motivates the adoption of green standards for buildings and its environment.
- Central Railway has implemented various green initiatives across its zone, with plantations creating green areas, installation of solar panels, customer-friendly initiatives at many stations, LED bulbs and lights etc.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

Covid Tracker helpline launched in Mumbai

- The coronavirus cases in Maharashtra including Mumbai have been witnessing a sharp spike since last few days.
- In order to make the testing convenient for citizens, the **Covid Tracker helpline is enabling Mumbaikars** to do Covid testing at home without going to the hospital.
- **'Covid Tracker' helpline** has been launched for the citizens of Mumbai.

About the helpline:

- Through this helpline, citizens are being provided guidance on **Covid -19** and various tests are being made available at home.
- Citizens are getting advice from expert doctors by contacting the helpline.
- Further tests, medications and treatments are also being provided at the **patient's home if required**.
- Critically ill patients are being assisted through government agencies for further treatment.
- All these facilities are being provided at government rates and as per the standards of the World Health Organization.
- This **initiative** by the **Udan Foundation** is expected to reduce the stress on the government medical system to some extent.

Cyber criminals attack MIDC computer systems last week in Maharashtra

- In Maharashtra, cyber criminals attacked **Maharashtra's Industrial Development Corporation's (MIDC)** computer systems last week.
- MIDC, in a statement said, cyber attackers have sent an email asking ransom.
- All the systems of MIDC are hosted on **private and local servers and it uses Trend Micro antivirus**.
- Infected computers were immediately disconnected from the network to minimize the impact.
- But the virus has affected works at regional offices of MIDC.
- The corporation has registered a complaint with **Mumbai Police's cyber unit** and various measures are being taken up to minimize the impact of attack and to further enhance systems.

Manipur

Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurated major healthcare projects in Imphal

- The Union Minister of Health **Dr. Harsh Vardhan** arrived in Manipur.
- The Minister will also attend the National Science Day Celebration to be held at Imphal.
- Union Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan who arrived in Imphal is going to inaugurate major healthcare projects taken up at **Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS)** Imphal.
- These projects include a new 3 Tesla MRI Machine in the newly constructed MRI Block, a 100 bedded capacity PG ladies Hostel, a new Neuro-Surgery ICU and a new block of College of Nursing.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

Manipur: Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana becomes changing factor for lives of tribal women

- There are a number of tribes across the country and the government has been implementing many welfare schemes and programs just to improve their income through various means.
- One such initiative is **Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana** which was launched in 2018 by the **Ministry of Tribal Affairs and Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India** with an intention to improve the tribal income through value addition of tribal products.
- The scheme has become a changing factor for the lives of many tribal women in Manipur.
- Manipur has **77 Van Dhan Vikas Kendras** comprising **1,995 Self Help Groups (SHGs)** and around **25,000 beneficiaries**.
- Registration of another 100 Kendras are under process and TRIFED has agreed to do funding for making storage and construction of hut bazaars for the products produced by SHGs.

Meghalaya

Meghalaya: State Govt launches online registration portal for migrant workers

- In Meghalaya, the State Government launched the online registration portal for migrant workers under the **Meghalaya Identification Registration (Safety and Security) of Migrant Workers Act 2020**, in a function organized by the Labour Department in Shillong.
- **Launching the portal, Deputy Chief Minister Prestone Tynsong** said, the online portal will improve the ease of doing business.
- He urged all stakeholders to utilize the portal so that a record of genuine migrant labourers or workers is maintained in the State.
- He said, this move is crucial for the development of the State as **labour forces** from other parts of the country are required to complete projects of different departments.
- He reiterated that only those migrant workers/labourers who fulfil various criteria stated under the Act, will be issued with a labour license.

Mizoram

Mizoram paired with Bihar through Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat campaign

- A country wide **Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat** campaign, which highlights the **age-old tradition of our country - unity in diversity**.
- The campaign portrays the very common principle of cultural harmony of the people though we are living in different geographical areas with diversity of language, food, custom and costumes.
- **Exchange of different languages**, food habits, and similarly paying respect to others' culture, music, dances and customs are in fact the **mantra of Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

- Under this **Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat** campaign, each state is paired with another state and highlights the milieu of mutual exchange of cultures.
- **Mizoram is paired with Bihar on Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat campaign.**
- Mizoram is endowed with serene landscape and rich natural resources.
- Many people from other states frequently visit Mizoram for occupational and travel purposes.
- Many of them talk about the **culture, peaceful behaviour and law-abiding nature of the Mizo people.**
- Also, many Mizo people who have visited Bihar still remember their good experiences.
- Recalling the ethos of culture, customs and heritage of Bihar, many people of Mizoram observed that Bihari people are very cooperative and they live a simple life.
- According to them, Bihar is a mix of **Hindu, Islam, Buddha, Jain and Christians.**
- A Sizable population belongs to **tribal communities.**
- Terming the Holi in Bihar as very joyous, they also found that Chhath festival is indigenous to people of Bihar.

Maitri Cycle Rally reaches at its last stop at Silkore border

- Giving a fillip to the Indo-Bangla friendship, the **Maitri Cycle Rally, organised by BSF**, completed its journey and reached its last stop at **Silkore border outpost in Mizoram.**
- **Director-General of BSF Rakesh Asthana** extended greetings to the people of Bangladesh on the occasion of the 101th birth anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.
- He wished that India and Bangladesh maintain their peaceful relations in the coming days too.
- A delegation of Border Guard Bangladesh was also present there to mark the program.
- During the over two months cycle rally, **12 BSF riders toured bordering areas of West Bengal, Assam, Tripura, Manipur, Meghalaya and Mizoram.**
- The rally was **started** from Panitar BoP in **24 North Pargana of West Bengal on 10th of January.**
- Maitri Cycle Rally is also a mark of paying tribute to the birth anniversary of the Father of Bangladesh, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.
- The rally is also aimed at enhancing the friendship between BSF and BGB.
- The rally is hoped to bolster the better management of the Indo-Bangla borders, supplement mutual cooperation, coordination and spirit of true friendship.

Nagaland

Union Health Minister lays foundation stone of Mon Medical College in Nagaland

- **Union Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan** laid the foundation stone of **Mon Medical College** covering 30 acres of land at **District Hospital Mon, Nagaland.**
- Dr. Harsh Vardhan said Prime Minister Modi has always been committed to the people of Northeast region since the day he entered the Parliament.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

- He said PM Modi has a vision to ensure that a place like Mon situated in the extreme corner of the country should not be deprived of the various facilities and services.

Nagaland launches its first air cargo services from Dimapur airport

- **Nagaland** launched its **first air cargo** services from **Dimapur** airport.
- Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio officially flagged off the service, a joint initiative of Department of Horticulture, Nagaland and Airport Authority of India with Air India and Indigo as airline partners.
- The introduction of air cargo service is a long felt need for the state as many of the products from the state go wasted.
- AAI is planning to construct a new terminal building including cargo service terminal at Dimapur with all modern facilities.

Nagaland Health Minister launches 'i-Learn'

- **Nagaland Health and Family Welfare Minister S Pangnyu Phom** launched **i-Learn**, a capacity building and performance tracking application for **Community Health Officers**, CHOs in the state at his office chamber in **Kohima**.
- The state government launched an i-Learn application in partnership with **USAID-NISHTHA/Jgpiego** which will cater across the **189 Health & Wellness centers** in the state.
- i-Learn is a learning management system for CHOs with self facilitated learning for improving and learning new skills in clinical and non clinical areas.
- The Health Minister said, like any other states in the country, Nagaland has been impacted with COVID.
- He however said the state is committed to defeat the pandemic and as such it has rolled out several interventions including digital technology like the Naga Tele health services.

Regional SARAS Fair 2021 : Kohima Local Ground

- **The Regional SARAS Fair 2021**, an initiative of Ministry of Rural Development, to promote rural products and build capacities of Self Help Groups, SHGs got underway at **Kohima Local Ground Launching the SARAS fair**, Advisor Urban Development and Municipal Affairs **Dr. Neikiesalie (Nicky) Kire** emphasised on the need for more participation of SHGs in such exhibitions and not to confine to their own self.
- He said this will help the members to exhibit their products, learn from each other but also gain experience in the field of marketing.
- **Mission Director Nagaland State Rural Livelihoods Mission**, NSRLM Imtimenla said the **main objective** is to bring the local artisans and Self Help Groups to promote and sale their products as well as get exposure in a bigger entrepreneurial platform.

Odisha

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

Fire spreading in forest areas of Similipal, Odisha

- **Union Ministers Dharmendra Pradhan and Pratap Chandra Sarangi** have expressed concern over the fire spreading in the forest areas of **Similipal in the Mayurbhanj district of Odisha**, which is a Tiger Reserve and also an important biosphere reserve of the country.
- Describing the situation as alarming, Union minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas and Steel Mr. Pradhan has sought the urgent attention of the **Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Prakash Javadekar and Chief Minister Naveen Pattnaik**.
- Union Minister of State for Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries and MSME Sarangi has described the forest fires in Similipal as not being a good sign for Asia.

Punjab

Punjab govt to create integrated technology solution for DBT schemes

- **Punjab Government** has decided to create a robust and integrated technology solution to implement and review the progress of the **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) schemes** in the state to ensure accountability, transparency, and responsiveness.
- An in-principle approval to this project was accorded at the maiden meeting of the Advisory Board of the **Punjab State DBT Cell, chaired by the Chief Secretary, Ms Vini Mahajan**, at Chandigarh.
- The Board also decided to ensure that the financial requirements for the development of such a system will be taken care of by the government.

Tripura

Udaipur Science Centre inaugurated at Udaipur , Tripura

- The **Udaipur Science Centre**, at Udaipur, Tripura was dedicated to the people by the Governor of Tripura, Shri Ramesh Bais on 28th February 2021.
- The Udaipur Science Centre has been developed at a cost of **Rs 6 crore** funded jointly by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India and Department of Science, Technology and Environment, Tripura Government and with this; **National Council of Science Museums (NCSM)** has now set-up science centres in all the north eastern states
- It is the **22nd Science Centre** which has been developed by NCSM and handed over to the State Governments under the Ministry of Culture's Scheme for Promotion of Culture of Science
- It is funded jointly by the Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India and Dept. of Science, Technology & Environment, Government of Tripura and with this; NCSM has now set-up science centres in all the north eastern states.

Uttarakhand

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

Shri Kedarnath Dham temple Portals to open on May 17

- The Portals of **Shri Kedarnath Dham temple** will open on May 17 this year.
- Shri Kedar Nath moving Deity will depart from **Omkareshwar Temple** Ukhimath to Kedarnath Dham on 14 May.
- **On the auspicious occasion of Maha Shivratri**, after the PANCHANG calculation, the date for opening of the portals of Kedar Nath temple was decided at Sri Omkareshwar Temple in Ukhimath.

Tirath Singh Rawat takes oath as Uttarakhand CM

- In **Uttarakhand**, **Tirath Singh Rawat** was sworn-in as the **new chief minister**.
- He was administered the oath of office by **Uttarakhand Governor Baby Rani Maurya** at Raj Bhawan in Dehradun.
- Senior BJP leaders, Central observer and former Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Dr. Raman Singh along with state BJP in-charge Dushyant Kumar were present on this occasion.
- Dr. Raman Singh told the media that the name of the cabinet ministers will be announced soon.
- Mr. Tirath Singh Rawat, Lok Sabha MP from Garhwal and former state BJP chief is the 10th Chief Minister of the Uttarakhand.
- His name was announced by the **outgoing chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat** after the legislature party meeting, which lasted around 30 minutes.
- Meanwhile, **Haryana's** BJP-JJP government won the trust vote in the house of state Assembly.
- The 55 votes were polled against the **No Confidence Motion** while **32 votes** were polled in favour of motion.

Uttar Pradesh

Uttarakhand CM declares ten thousand each for ASHA, Anganwadi volunteers

- **Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat** has announced **Rs Ten thousand each for ASHA and Anganwadi volunteers**, who had worked during the Covid 19 phase on the occasion of International Women Day.
- He also announced **Rs. 15000 for each of the Mahila Mangal Dal and women self-help groups**.
- The Chief Minister virtually attended the function and addressed the gathering in Gairsain in Chamoli district and said that empowerment of women is extremely important for the all-around development of the society and the state.
- The Chief Minister said that during his four years in power, he had taken several steps for the welfare of women.

GRAM UJALA programme launched in Varanasi

- The **Union Minister of State (I/C) for Power & New and Renewable Energy, RK Singh**, launched the **GRAM UJALA programme** in Varanasi of Uttar Pradesh.
- Under this program **Convergence Energy Services Limited, CESL**, a wholly owned subsidiary of **Energy Efficiency Services Limited -EESL**, will distribute high quality LED bulbs, at an affordable cost in rural areas.
- Under the scheme **One crore 50 lakh LED bulbs** will be distributed in phase 1 resulting in energy savings of **2025 million KWh/year** and **CO2 reductions of 1.65 million T CO2/year**.
- He said, the scheme has crossed **6,150 distribution mark in Arrah, Bihar** within 2 days of launch of scheme.

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- The Power Minister said that India is leading in energy transition as well as energy efficiency.
- This scheme is designed specifically for rural homes keeping affordability in mind and it will also result in energy savings as a **12 Watt LED bulb** gives equivalent light as a 100 watt incandescent bulb.

Uttar Pradesh govt launches 2nd phase of Mission Shakti

- **Uttar Pradesh** government launched **the second phase of Mission Shakti on the occasion of International women's day.**
- It will become a **milestone in women empowerment.**
- In addition to that **First commercial flight from Bareilly** also started On March 08.
- The flight was operated by all women crew members' carrying **60 passengers to Delhi.**
- With this flight Bareilly became 8th city in state with flight services on 4 days in a week to delhi within 2000 rupees.
- Many discussions, pink marathons, competitions and other events were organized to mark the occasion.
- Under Mission Shakti campaign Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurated women special Police stations in 18 districts along with pink booths and pink toilets.
- On the occasion of International Women's Day, the 'First Adarsh Mahila Barrack' in Mahila Thana, Muzaffarnagar was also inaugurated.
- Like the first Adarsh Barrack, it has all the basic facilities and amenities and in addition has Dressing Area, Lockers and attached Washrooms for the female police personnel.

Development of Sewage Treatment Plants in UP's Moradabad – Agreement signed

- A tripartite Concession **Agreement** has been **signed between the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), Uttar Pradesh Jal Nigam and GA Infra Private Limited-Lahoti Buildcon Limited** for development of **Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) for Moradabad.**
- The contract was awarded at a total cost of 99.68 crore rupees.
- **Ministry of Jal Shakti** said that the project is aimed at eliminating flow of untreated sewage from Moradabad city into the River Ganga thereby reducing pollution load in the river.
- The NMCG approved the project for construction of the **25 Million Litre per Day (MLD) Sewage Treatment Plant**, developing Interception and Diversion structures and Sewage Pumping Stations including Operation.
- This project also aims to take care of the existing sewerage problems in the town and the resultant sewage pollution in the Ram Ganga.
- The lending for these projects is **already offered by SBI Capital.**

About Sewage Treatment Plants:

- Wastewater and sewage, usually from a number of properties, are fed into the primary settlement tank where solids and liquids separate and the liquor flows into the biozone chamber.
- In the chamber, a pump aerates the waste and encourages good bacteria to digest the organic matter, breaking it down and purifying it.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

- In much sewage, plastic media are submerged within the aeration tank so that bacteria may attach and grow faster, these days attached growth is considered modern development.
- Submerged Aerated Filter, Submerged Aerated Fixed Film, Rotating Biological Contact Filter are some variants of attached growth process.
- Sewage treatment generally involves three stages, called primary, secondary and tertiary treatment.

UP CM grand initiate Shaheed Ashfaq Ulla Khan Zoological Park in Gorakhpur

- **Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath** inaugurated **Shaheed Ashfaq Ulla Khan Zoological Park in Gorakhpur**.
- This is the **first zoo in Purvanchal** and **the third in the state**.
- In his address, the **Chief Minister** said the construction of the zoo has been completed in a record time of four years.
- He added that the zoo will not only provide entertainment and learning to the people but it has also opened the possibilities of tourism in the region.
- The Chief Minister said the zoo has been named after great freedom fighter **Shaheed Ashfaq Ullah Khan**.
- He said that the nation is celebrating the **75th anniversary of its Independence as Azadi Ka Amit Mahotsav** this year, and it is a tribute to the great freedom fighter.
- The foundation of the Gorakhpur zoo was laid a decade ago in May 2011 but its construction gained momentum after the year 2017.

West Bengal

The third edition of Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav begins

- The **third and final edition of the Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav 2021 in West Bengal** organized by the **Ministry of Culture, Government of India** began on **27th February 2021 at Murshidabad, West Bengal**.
- Directors of all the zonal cultural centres of the Ministry of Culture were present during the inauguration of the Mahotsav and lit the ceremonial lamp .
- The Mahotsav in Murshidabad will run for two days, 27–28 February 2021.
- The Mahotsav started with colourful performances by the local artists, which included **'Baul Gaan', 'Alkup Gaan', 'Leto gaan', 'Jhumuriya' and Ranpa folk dances**.
- Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav, the flagship festival of Culture Ministry has been organized since 2015 with the active participation of Seven Zonal Culture Centres and has been playing a pivotal role to take the vibrant culture of India out to the masses instead of confining it to auditoria and galleries.
- It has been instrumental in showcasing folk and tribal art, dance, music, cuisines & culture of one state in other states reinforcing the cherished goal of "Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat" and at the same time providing an effective platform to the artists and artisans to support their livelihood.
- Earlier Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsavs have been held till date since November, 2015 in various states and cities such as Delhi, Varanasi, Bengaluru, Tawang, Gujarat, Karnataka, Tehri and Madhya Pradesh.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

BEL pays interim dividend of 140 % on its paid-up capital to Govt for 2020-21

- **Navratna Defence Public Sector Undertaking Bharat Electronics Limited**, BEL paid interim dividend of **140 percent** on its paid-up capital to the Government for financial year 2020-21.
- The Interim Dividend cheque of **174 crore 43 lakh 63 thousand 5 hundred 69 rupees payable on the shares held by the President of India, to Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in New Delhi.**
- The BEL has declared 140 per cent as interim dividend to its shareholders for the financial year 2020-21.
- This is the **18th consecutive year that BEL is paying interim dividend.**
- It had paid a total dividend of 280 per cent on its paid-up capital for the financial year 2019-20.

'Swarnim Vijay Mashaal' stick out 'Akashvani Bhawan' in Kolkata

- The **golden jubilee celebrations of the 1971 war** across the nation continue with the Victory flame reaching the **Akashvani Bhawan in Kolkata.**
- The head of office of **All India Radio Kolkata, Deputy Director General Anima Das Debnath received the Swarnim Vijay Mashal.**
- Celebration of the '**Swarnim Vijay Varsh**' had been launched on **1st March from Delhi** by lighting up the '**Swarnim Vijay Mashaal**' from the Eternal Flame of National War Memorial.
- Four 'Vijay Mashaals' were further lit from it and sent to various parts of the country.
- The victory flame started its journey in Kolkata from Netaji Bhawan, the house of the great freedom fighter Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and later travelled to places including Science city, Victoria Memorial and Akashvani Bhawan, Kolkata.

Revision Points

State	Chief Minister	Governor
Andhra Pradesh	YS Jagan Mohan Reddy	Biswa Bhusan Harichandan
Arunachal Pradesh	Pema Khandu	B. D. Mishra (Retd.)
Assam	Sarbananda Sonowal	Jagdish Mukhi
Bihar	Nitish Kumar	Phagu Chauhan
Chhattisgarh	Bhupesh Baghel	Sushri Anusuiya Uikey
Delhi	Arvind Kejriwal	
Goa	Pramod Sawant	Bhagat Singh Koshyari
Gujarat	Vijaybhai R. Rupani	Acharya Dev Vrat
Haryana	Manohar Lal	Satyadeo Narain Arya
Himachal Pradesh	Jairam Thakur	Bandaru Dattatraya
Jharkhand	Hemant Soren	Droupadi Murmu

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Karnataka	B. S. Yediyurappa	Vajubhai Vala
Kerala	Pinarayi Vijayan	Arif Mohammed Khan
Madhya Pradesh	Shivraj Singh Chouhan	Anandiben Patel
Maharashtra	Uddhav Thackeray	Bhagat Singh Koshyari
Manipur	N. Biren Singh	Najma Heptulla
Meghalaya	Conrad Kongkal Sangma	Satya Pal Malik
Mizoram	Pu Zoramthanga	P.S. Sreedharan Pillai
Nagaland	Neiphiu Rio	R. N. Ravi
Odisha	Naveen Patnaik	Ganeshi Lal
Punjab	Capt. Amarinder Singh	V.P. Singh Badnore
Rajasthan	Ashok Gehlot	Kalraj Mishra
Sikkim	PS Golay	Ganga Prasad
Tamil Nadu	Edappadi K. Palaniswami	Banwarilal Purohit
Telangana	K Chandrasekhar Rao	Tamilisai Soundararajan
Tripura	Biplab Kumar Deb	Ramesh Bais
Uttar Pradesh	Yogi Aditya Nath	Anandiben Patel
Uttarakhand	Trivendra Singh Rawat	Baby Rani Maurya
West Bengal	Mamata Banerjee	Jagdeep Dhankhar

List of Governors & Administrators

Union Territory	Lt. Governor & Administrator
Andaman and Nicobar Island	Admiral D K Joshi
Chandigarh	V.P. Singh Badnore
Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu	Praful Patel
Delhi (NCT)	Anil Baijal
Jammu and Kashmir	Manoj Sinha
Lakshadweep	Praful Patel
Puducherry	Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan (Addl. Charge)
Ladakh	Radha Krishna Mathur

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

Important National News

Chenab bridge, world's highest rail bridge taller than Eiffel Tower, completed by end of 2021

- **Chenab bridge, the world's tallest railway bridge** over Chenab River in Kouri area, will achieve another **engineering milestone**.
- The **Konkan Railway Corporation Limited (KRCL)** is building the Chenab bridge over a challenging **111 km-stretch** under the **Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL)** project.
- It will connect the Valley with the rest of the country through railways.
- The Chenab bridge is being constructed **359 metres above Chenab's river** bed and will be 35 metres taller than the Eiffel Tower (which has a height of 324 metre).
- The length of the Chenab bridge will be 1,315 metres with 17 spans, of which the span of the main arch across Chenab river will be 467 metres. The viaduct portion comprises a straight and curved portion. The curvilinear portion is located on a 2.74-degree sharp curve.

New guidelines for social media intermediaries: Prakash Javadekar

- **Information & Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar** has said that the new guidelines for **social media intermediaries, OTT platforms and Digital Media** will bring uniformity among all in the field of media.
- The **Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics code** notified by the government, Mr. Javadekar said this will empower the users and will for the first time ensure grievance redressal mechanism for them.
- The Minister asserted that the new guidelines which have been welcomed by the world community is based on the principle of responsible freedom.
- The government had notified the new guidelines based on the **principle of soft-touch self-regulation mechanism for Digital Media, Social Media Intermediaries and OTT platforms** in the country.

Saras Aajeevika Mela opens at Noida Haat

- **Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Narendra Singh Tomar** inaugurated Saras Aajeevika Mela 2021 at Noida Haat.
- Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Kailash Choudhary was also present on the occasion.
- Mr Tomar said that the Ministry of Rural Development is working to include more women in **Self Help Groups (SHGs)**.
- He said these SHGs played a vital role in increasing family income and improving quality of life.
- Prime Minister's call for self-reliant India, the minister said Atmanirbharta can't be achieved only by Government's schemes and efforts.
- He urged the empowered **SHGs to come forward and help other SHGs to become Atmanirbhar**.
- The **Saras Aajeevika Mela 2021** is being organized from 26th February to 14th March 2021 by the Ministry of Rural Development.
- More than 300 rural self-help groups and craftsmen from 27 states are participating in the Mela.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

DGCA offers flight operators to give concessions in ticket prices to travellers who carry no baggage

- **Directorate General of Civil Aviation, DGCA** has allowed domestic flight operators to give concessions in ticket prices to travellers who carry no baggage or only cabin baggage.
- At present, a traveller can carry up to **7 kilograms of cabin baggage and 15 kilograms of check-in baggage** without having to pay any additional cost.
- The new rule will allow airline operators to provide tickets at lesser prices to those who opt to travel with no baggage or only with cabin baggage within the permissible weight limit.
- As part of the new airline baggage policy, scheduled airlines will be allowed to offer free baggage allowance as well as **zero baggage or no check in baggage fares**.
- The airlines will however have to prominently display the additional charges applicable in case the passenger turns up with extra baggage.

City Innovation Exchange (CiX) Launched for Fostering Innovation in Urban Ecosystem

- The **City Innovation Exchange (CiX)** platform was launched by **Shri Durga Shanker Mishra**, Secretary, **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** at an online event.
- The platform will be a significant addition **to the growing innovation ecosystem of India and focuses on fostering innovative practices in cities**.
- The City Innovation Exchange (CiX) will connect cities to innovators across the national ecosystem to design innovative solutions for their pressing challenges.
- The platform will ease the discovery, design & validation of solutions through a robust, transparent and user centric process that will reduce barriers for innovators and cities to discover fitting solutions.
- The Platform has more than **400 start-ups, 100 smart cities, more than 150 challenges statements and over 215 solutions at the time of launch**.

Jal Shakti Ministry announces 12 iconic sites for transforming them into Swachh Tourist Destinations

- **Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Ministry of Jal Shakti** has announced the selection of **twelve iconic sites under Phase IV of Swachh Iconic Places**.
- These sites include Ajanta Caves in Maharashtra, Sanchi Stupa in Madhya Pradesh, Kumbhalgarh Fort, Jaisalmer Fort and Ramdevra in Rajasthan, Golconda Fort in Telangana and Konark Sun Temple in Odisha.
- Chandigarh's Rock Garden, Jammu and Kashmir's Dal Lake, Banke Bihari Temple in Mathura, Agra Fort in Uttar Pradesh and Kalighat Temple in West Bengal are the other sites.
- The initiative aims at enhancing the experience of both domestic and foreign visitors by improving the sanitation and cleanliness standards at and around the sites.

Khadi, Village Industry Commission's e-Market Portal registers over one crore turnover in eight month

- **Khadi and Village Industry Commission's e-Market Portal** has registered a gross turnover of over **one crore 10 lakh rupees in just eight months of its launch**.

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Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

- Minister for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises **Nitin Gadkari** lauded Khadi's successful e-commerce venture.
- This portal has provided a wide marketing platform for various Khadi and village industry products to a larger population.
- Online orders have been received from all 31 States and Union Territories including the far-flung Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir among others.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan mark National Science Day function

- Union Minister of Science and Technology **Dr. Harsh Vardhan** highlighted how science technology and innovation (STI) would impact our future in education, skills and functioning in the post-pandemic world.
- He was addressing the National Science Day (NSD) function **through video-conferencing** from Imphal, Manipur.
- Awards to science communicators and women scientists were also conferred on the occasion.
- National Science Day is celebrated to commemorate the discovery of Raman Effect on this day every year.
- Dr Vardhan said that 30 percent increase in this year's budget of Ministry of Science and Technology and Earth Sciences put together for the year 2021-22 would provide stimulus to Science and Technology infrastructure resources in the country.
- He said, in view of last year's challenges thrown by the COVID-19 pandemic, the **theme of the National Science Day 2021, 'Future of STI: Impacts on Education, Skills, and Work,'** becomes all the more important.

PM highlights need to take science forward with mantra of 'Lab to Land'

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** stated that there is a lot of contribution of the power of science in the '**Atmanirbhar Bharat Campaign**'.
- He emphasized that the nation has to move science forward with the mantra of '**Lab to Land**'.
- He cited the example of Chintala Venkat Reddy from Hyderabad who developed breeds of wheat and rice that specially contained vitamin D. Mr Modi also mentioned Urugen Futsog of Ladakh who is growing about 20 crops organically there.
- The Prime Minister also touched upon the subject of examinations.
- He said like every year, this year too there will be a '**Pariksha Pe Charcha**' in March.
- He requested all exam warriors, parents and teachers to share their experiences and tips on MyGov platform and Narendra Modi app

Consumer Affairs Ministry had launched Mobile App, and now it's step up

- Government has said that monitoring and predictive analysis of prices of essential commodities has taken a giant step forward in India **Mobile App for price monitoring of 22 essential commodities.**
- The **Consumer Affairs Ministry** had launched this Mobile App last month to improve the quality of prices data for reporting daily prices by the price reporting centers.
- The App is providing effective real time information about retail and wholesale prices from **127 locations across the country.**

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- The Ministry said, price reporting through Mobile App ensures reporting from the market location as data are geo-tagged thereby displaying the location from where price data are reported.

Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh begins first academic session of MBBS at GMC, Doda

- **Union Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office Dr. Jitendra Singh** inaugurated the **first academic session of MBBS students at Government Medical College, Doda** in Jammu division of Jammu and Kashmir for the 2020-21 batch.
- Congratulating the students of the first batch of MBBS starting at GMC, Doda, the Minister described it as a historic moment and welcomed development.
- He thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan for the initiative to set up world class health infrastructure in the Union Territory by building five new Medical colleges.
- Dr. Singh said, Udhampur-Doda is the only parliamentary constituency in India which has three Government Medical Colleges.

India Sending Humanitarian Assistance To Drought-Hit Madagascar: S Jaishankar

- **India** announced it will send a consignment of **1,000 metric tonnes of rice and 100,000 tablets of Hydroxychloroquine to drought-hit Madagascar.**
- The humanitarian assistance will be delivered onboard the Indian Naval Ship Jalashwa. The ship will leave with food and medical assistance on March 3 and is expected to reach the Port of Ehoala in Madagascar between **March 21 and 24.**
- The Indian assistance was conveyed to the Madagascar government during External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's phone call with his Madagascar counterpart Tehindrazanarivelo Djacoba A.S Olive.
- Indian naval training team will also be deployed in Madagascar for capacity building and training of the Malagasy Special Forces for two weeks.
- Besides Madagascar, INS Jalashwa will also visit Port Anjoun in the Republic of Comoros to deliver a consignment of 1,000 metric tonnes of Indian rice, following a commitment made by Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu during his visit to Comoros in October 2019.
- The supply of this food assistance was announced by Vice President **M Venkaiah Naidu during his visit to Comoros in October 2019.**
- The supplies of food assistance and support for capacity building to the friendly countries of Madagascar and Comoros is in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of SAGAR and India's time-tested role as a net security provider in the Indian Ocean Region.

Union Cabinet apprised of the signing of MoU between India, French Republic in field of renewable energy cooperation

- The **Union Cabinet**, chaired by the Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** was apprised of the signing of **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** between **India and French Republic in the field of renewable energy cooperation.**
- The MoU was signed in January this year.

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- The **objective** of the MoU is to establish the basis for promotion of bilateral cooperation in the field of new and renewable energy on the basis of mutual benefit, equality and reciprocity.
- It covers technologies relating to solar, wind, hydrogen and biomass energy. The MoU entails exchange and training of scientific and technical personnel; exchange of scientific and technological information and data; organization of workshops and seminars; transfer of equipment, know-how and technology and development of joint research and technological projects.
- The MoU will help in the development of technological know-how in the field of Renewable Energy and will aid the process of attaining the target of 450 GW of installed Renewable Energy capacity by 2030.

PM Modi to Mark the inaugural session on 'Harnessing Education, Research and Skill Development for Atmanirbhar Bharat'

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** will address the inaugural session on 'Harnessing Education, Research and Skill Development for an Atmanirbhar Bharat'.
- **Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank** will address valedictory session.

Education Minister releases study material of Indian Knowledge Tradition courses of NIOS

- Union Minister of Education Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' released the study material of **Indian Knowledge Tradition courses of National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS)** in Noida, Uttar Pradesh.
- Mr Pokhriyal said, NIOS is already making efforts to spread the Indian knowledge tradition within the country and abroad.
- He informed, Vedic studies, Sanskrit grammar, Indian philosophy, Sanskrit literature and Sanskrit language courses have been prepared for Secondary and Senior Secondary level by NIOS.

Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI) Celebrates its 9th Foundation Day

- The **Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI)** celebrated its **9th Foundation Day on 01 March 2021**.
- The event also included special addresses through virtual conferences by the High Commissioner of India to Bangladesh, Shri Vikram Kumar Doraiswami and other senior officers from the Government of India and the Asian Development Bank.
- The LPAI website, **Newsletter and News Journal** were also launched during the Foundation Day event.
- The event concluded with a virtual panel discussion on the subject "Facilitating Regional Trade and Connectivity through Land Route", which was attended by various eminent scholars and persons from India, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal.

Real-Time Monitoring System of Toll Plazas launched by Union minister Nitin Gadkari

- **Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari** launched the **Real-Time Monitoring System of Toll Plazas** at a function in **New Delhi**.
- Speaking on the occasion, Mr Gadkari said that implementation of **FASTag** at toll plazas has improved electronic toll collections and facilitated ease of doing business.
- He said it also saves time and fuel.

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- The government has made **FASTag mandatory from the 15th February midnight** and any vehicle not fitted with it will be charged double the toll at electronic toll plazas across the country.
- Mr Gadkari said the government is also working on ways to reduce the number of road accidents in the country by half up to 2025.
- Mr Gadkari said, over **eleven thousand kilometres of National Highways** were constructed in the 11 months of this financial year and the per day road construction has reached **33 kilometres**.

Field assessment of Swachh Survekshan -2021 launched by Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry

- Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry launched the field assessment of **Swachh Survekshan -2021** at a **web event in New Delhi**.
- This will be the sixth edition of the annual cleanliness survey.
- Swachh Survekshan was introduced in 2016 as a competitive framework to encourage cities to improve the status of urban sanitation while encouraging large scale citizen participation.
- **Secretary of Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry Durga Shankar Mishra** said, the survey has led to a spirit of healthy competition among cities and towns.
- The journey that started in 2016 with only 73 cities with a million plus population has grown manifold, with 434 cities in 2017, 4,203 cities in 2018, 4,237 cities in 2019 and 4,242 cities in 2020.
- Cities have been regularly filling in their data, updating their progress in the MIS along with running several citizen centric campaigns in preparation of **Swachh Survekshan-2021**.

Sugamya Bharat App & handbook entitled “Access - The Photo Digest” launched by Union minister Thaawarchand Gehlot

- **Minister for Social justice and Empowerment Thaawarchand Gehlot** will virtually launch “**Sugamya Bharat App**” and a handbook entitled “**Access - The Photo Digest**”.
- Sugamya Bharat App is a means for sensitising and enhancing accessibility.
- It provides for five main features of which four are directly related to enhancing accessibility.
- They **include registration of complaints** of inaccessibility across the broad pillars of built environment, transportation sector and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) ecosystem, positive feedback of examples and best practices worth emulating being shared by people as jan-bhagidhari; Departmental updates; and guidelines and circulars related to accessibility.
- The fifth feature is a special feature meant only for Divyangjan for COVID related issues.

PM Modi salutes all those working towards wildlife protection- World Wildlife Day

- On **World Wildlife Day**, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has saluted all those working towards wildlife protection.
- He said, be it lions, tigers and leopards, India is seeing a steady rise in the population of various animals.
- Mr Modi added that people should do everything possible to ensure protection of the country's forests and safe habitats for animals.

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Nag River Pollution Abatement Project approved at a cost of over Rs 2,117

- Union Minister **Nitin Gadkari** announced that the **Nag River Pollution Abatement Project** has been approved at a cost of over **Rs 2,117 crore**.
- The river which flows through **Nagpur** city thus giving its name to the city is now a highly polluted water channel of sewage and industrial waste.
- It will reduce the pollution level in terms of untreated sewage, flowing solid waste and other impurities flowing into the Nag river and its tributaries.
- The project approved under the National River Conservation Plan will be implemented by the National River Conservation Directorate.

PM Modi pays tributes to 105th Birth Anniversary of former Odisha CM Biju Patnaik

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tributes to **former Chief Minister of Odisha Biju Patnaik** on his **105th Birth Anniversary(5th March)**.
- Mr Modi said, Biju Babu's futuristic vision for India, emphasis on human empowerment as well as social justice inspires us all.
- He said, the nation is proud of his efforts for **Odisha's progress**.

PM Modi to hold virtual summit with Swedish counterpart

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** will hold a virtual summit with his **Swedish counterpart Stefan Löfven**.
- This will be the fifth interaction between the two leaders since 2015.
- **India and Sweden** have warm and friendly relations based on shared values of democracy, freedom, pluralism and rules-based international order.
- During the Summit, the two leaders will hold comprehensive discussions on the entire spectrum of the bilateral relations and exchange views on regional and global issues including further strengthening of cooperation in the post-COVID era.
- Around 250 Swedish companies are actively operating in India in various sectors such as health and life sciences, auto industry, clean technology, defence, heavy machinery and equipment. Around 75 Indian companies are also active in Sweden.

Union Education Minister announces opening of 2 new KVs in Punjab and Karnataka

- **Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'** announced opening of **two new Kendriya Vidyalayas in Karnataka and Punjab**.
- KV Sadalaga, Belagavi, in Karnataka and KV IIT Ropar in Punjab will be two new additions to Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan.
- With this, the total number of **KVs across the country will rise to 1247**.
- Initially, these two Vidyalayas will function with classes I to V and grow consequentially upto class XII.

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- When these Vidyalayas start functioning in full capacity, around 1000 students of the area will be benefited in each school.
- The Admission process in both the Vidyalayas will start in the academic session 2021-22.

Combined Commanders' Conference starts at Kevadiya in Gujarat

- A three-day Combined Commanders' Conference will begin at **Kevadia in Gujarat**.
- Theaterisation of armed forces, self-reliance in the defence sector and evolving threats in the region will be the focus areas during the three-day annual event.
- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will address the top commanders of the **Indian Army, Navy and Air Force**.
- During the conference, the setting up a new air defence command and maritime command is likely to be discussed at length.
- Implementation of the air defence command timeline is also likely to come up for discussion.
- The formation of theatre commands will synergise the capabilities and combat potential of the three forces during war and peace

IMPCL decided to sell products on Government e-Market portal

- **Indian Medicines Pharmaceutical Corporation Limited (IMPCL)** will sell products on the Government **e-Market (GeM) portal**.
- The IMPCL and GeM has finalised a deal in this regard and now the Ayurvedic and Unani medicines of IMPCL will figure on the GeM portal to hundreds of government sector buyers.
- This will facilitate quick procurement of these medicines by Central and State Government institutions for their healthcare programmes.
- It will also help to streamline the procurement and distribution of Ayurvedic and Unani medicines by State Units.
- The thousands of patients and other clients who visit Government Ayush hospitals every day stand to gain because of this increased availability of such medicines even in far-flung Ayush Hospitals and Clinics.
- The GeM has created **31 categories covering 311 medicines** which live in the marketplace and IMPCL can now upload these medicines on GeM Portal.
- IMPCL, the 100 crore rupees turnover PSU of the **Ministry of AYUSH**, is one of the most trusted manufacturers of Ayush medicines in the country and is known for the authenticity of its formulations.

India Commemorates “Chabahar Day” on 04 March 2021

- India commemorated the ‘**Chabahar Day**’ on March 04, 2021 on the **sidelines of the Maritime India Summit-2021 which was held from March 2-4, 2021**.
- The event was held virtually. Ministers from **Afghanistan, Armenia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia and Uzbekistan** participated in the event.
- It is the only Iranian port with direct access to the Indian Ocean and the agreement was signed between India and Iran in 2018 for its development.

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About Chabahar Port :

- Chabahar Port is a seaport located in southeastern Iran, on the Gulf of Oman.
- The commemoration was part of the strategy of India to boost its involvement in the Chabahar Port, which is New Delhi's key gateway to Afghanistan.
- The location of the Chabahar port has strategic advantage and high potential to provide connectivity among India, Iran, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and other **Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries**, and boost trade.
- The Port will also be part of INSTC network connecting Mumbai with Russia via Iran.
- It is a key pillar of India's Indo-Pacific vision, to connect Eurasia with the Indian Ocean Region.

MP, West Bengal top performers in land records digitisation

- **Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal and Odisha** are the best performing Indian states in land record digitisation, according to an annual land records index prepared by Delhi-based think-tank **National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER)**.
- The NCAER's Land Records and Services Index (NLRSI) 2020-21 released Thursday said nearly all states and union territories 29 out of 32 showed a gradual improvement in their efforts to digitise land records compared to the previous year.
- The data was primarily collected on two aspects: the extent of digitisation of land records and the quality of these records.
- Out of the 32 states and UTs ranked, only Assam and Lakshadweep Islands saw a decline in points from last year.
- As a result, the mean N-LRSI score across the 32 states and UTs has shown an increase of 16.6 per cent in 2020-21, from 38.7 in 2019-20 to 45.1 in 2020-21 (out of the maximum score of 100 points).

EPFO board recommends an unchanged 8.5% interest on deposits for 2020-21

- The **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)** has kept the **interest rates unchanged on provident fund deposits at 8.5 per cent for financial year 2020-21**.
- This rate, the **same** as last year's, is the lowest offered by **EPFO in eight years**.
- There were speculations that the EPFO would lower interest on provident fund deposits for this fiscal (2020-21) from 8.5 per cent given in 2019-20, owing to the coronavirus-induced slowdown through 2020.
- The retirement fund body has more than **50 million active subscribers**
- The decision was taken at the **Central Board of Trustees (CBT)** meeting, which is the main decision-making body of EPFO.
- The interest rate would be officially notified in the government gazette following which EPFO would credit the rate of interest into the subscribers' accounts

Dr. Harsh Vardhan launches "CSIR Floriculture Mission"

- **Dr Harsh Vardhan** encouraged scientists of **CSIR** laboratories across the country to develop the land available at each laboratory to be set up as a model under the "**CSIR Floriculture Mission**".

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- CSIR Floriculture Mission has been approved for implementation in **21 States and Union Territories of India wherein available knowledge base in CSIR Institutes will be utilized** and leveraged to help Indian farmers and industry reposition itself to meet the import requirements.
- The CSIR Floriculture Mission is expected to create opportunities for entrepreneurship development in floriculture. Infusion of the latest technologies in the field of floriculture can be successfully led by CSIR.
- The mission will focus on commercial floral crops, seasonal/annual crops, wild ornaments and cultivation of flower crops for honey bee rearing. Some of the popular crops include Gladiolus, Canna, Carnation, Chrysanthemum, Gerbera, Liliium, Marigold, Rose, Tuberose etc.
- This Mission is being implemented in collaboration with Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)-Directorate of Floriculture, Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), Ministry of Commerce, Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Ltd. (TRIFED), Fragrance and Flavour Development Centre (FFDC), Kannauj, Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) and Universities.
- The Portal is to facilitate the public to submit the societal problems that can be resolved using S&T interventions.

Centre constitutes National Committee headed by PM Modi to 75 years of India's Independence commemoration

- The Government has constituted a National Committee headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to commemorate **75 years of India's Independence**.
- The committee has **259 members** and includes dignitaries and eminent citizens from all walks of life.
- It will provide policy direction and guidelines for formulation of programs for the commemoration of 75th anniversary of Indian Independence, at the national and international levels.
- The 75 years of India's Independence falls on **15th August next year** and celebrations are proposed to be launched 75 weeks prior to this date on 12th March this year.
- **12th March is the 91st anniversary of the historic Salt Satyagraha led by Mahatma Gandhi.**
- The Committee will hold its first meeting to discuss modalities relating to preparatory activities.
- The Government intends to commemorate 75 years of India's Independence in a befitting manner at national and international level in the form of '**Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav**'.

New Delhi World Book Fair 2021 inaugurated by Education Minister

- **Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'** inaugurated the **New Delhi World Book Fair 2021 - Virtual Edition**.
- The Minister appreciated that '**National Education Policy-2020**' is the **theme** of the book fair.
- The Minister said it has emerged as the world's biggest reform.
- He said, National Education Policy will develop India not only as the Knowledge hub but will also help in making learners ideal and global citizens.
- The Minister congratulated National Book Trust and its entire team for holding the Virtual Edition of Book Fair.

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New Cultural Centre of High Commission of India inaugurated by EAM Dr. Jaishankar in Dhaka

- A new cultural centre of the High Commission of India was inaugurated by the External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar in Dhaka.
- It is the second cultural centre of the High Commission of India after the Dhanmondi centre at the Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre in Dhaka.
- The new cultural centre has facilities for conducting short term courses on Indian art forms and holding cultural programmes and art-exhibitions.
- Inaugurating the cultural centre at the old India House Building Dr. Jaishankar said that the new centre will act as a centre of energy for the unique relations between India and Bangladesh.
- He said that the shared cultural heritage of the two countries is the strength of their partnership.
- Commending the opening of the second cultural centre, Dr. Jaishankar said that Dhaka is among the few cities in the world that hosts more than one Indian cultural centre.

Free entry for women visitors to all centrally protected monuments for Women's Day

- Women visitors will be allowed free entry to all centrally protected monuments to mark International Women's Day.
- Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) said both foreign and Indian Women visitors will be allowed free entry to all centrally protected monuments.
- There are 3 thousand 6 hundred 91 centrally protected monuments under the ASI.

PM Modi inaugurates 7500th Janaushadhi Kendra at NEIGRIHMS, Shillong

- On March 07, 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the 'Janaushadhi Diwas' celebrations via video conferencing.
- The last day of the week which falls on 7th March is celebrated as 'Janaushadhi Diwas'.
- The theme of Janaushadhi Diwas 2021 is "Jan Aushadhi – Seva bhi, Rozgar bhi".
- The Prime Minister will dedicate to the nation the 7500th Janaushadhi Kendra at North Eastern Indira Gandhi Regional Institute of Health and Medical Sciences (NEIGRIHMS), Shillong during the event.
- The celebrations are organised by the Bureau of Pharma PSUs of India (BPPI), the implementing agency of Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP).
- In 2021, third Janaushadhi Diwas is being celebrated.

India Science Research Fellowship (ISRF) 2021 Announced; 40 Scholars From Six Countries Awarded

- Forty scholars from six countries have been awarded with Indian Science Research Fellowship (ISRF) 2021.
- The forty scholars will now have the opportunity to carry out their research in Indian institutes and universities.
- These scholars have been selected based on research proposal, experience, academic merit and publication record and recommended for the award of ISRF 2021.

About ISRF:

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- ISRF programme has provided an opportunity to the young researchers from neighbouring countries to get access to the state of art facilities available in the Indian institutes/universities.
- This fellowship is a platform to establish research cooperation with neighbouring countries of India, which is one of the mandates of DST's International Science and Technology Cooperation.
- The initiative was launched by the **Department of Science and Technology (DST)** in 2015 for Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand.
- It has been implemented since 2015, and as of now, **5 calls** have been announced in this programme with participation of young researchers from these countries. About 128 fellows from these countries have been awarded fellowship under this programme.

National Committee to commemorate 75 years of India's Independence to hold its first meeting

- The **National Committee** set up to commemorate **75 years** of India's Independence will hold its **first meeting to discuss modalities relating to preparatory activities**.
- The **259** member committee headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi will meet virtually.
- The committee includes Union Ministers, Chief Ministers, Governors as well as leaders of different political parties including BJP President JP Nadda and Congress Chief Sonia Gandhi.
- The Government has decided to commemorate 75 years of India's Independence in a befitting manner at National and International level in the form of **Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav**.
- The National Committee includes dignitaries and eminent citizens from all walks of life including Artists, Sportspersons, Business leaders, Gandhians and media persons.
- The committee will provide policy direction and guidelines for formulation of programs for the commemoration.
- The 75 years of India's Independence falls on 15th August next year.
- The celebrations are proposed to be launched 75 weeks prior to this date on 12th of this month.
- 12th March is the 91st anniversary of the historic Salt Satyagraha led by Mahatma Gandhi.

Smriti Irani says India will be fully Aatmanirbhar in Silk production in next two years:

- **Textiles Minister Smriti Irani** has said that India will be **fully Aatmanirbhar in Silk production in the next two years**.
- Addressing the National level programme on convergence of **Agro-Sericulture and eradication of Thigh reeling in New Delhi**, Mrs Irani said that raw silk production in the country has increased 35 per cent in the last six years.
- She informed that more than 90 lakh people have got employment in raw silk production.
- On the eve of International Women's Day, the Textiles Ministry distributed Buniyaad Reeling Machines to Women Silk Reelers to eradicate Unhygienic and Obsolete Thigh Reeling Practice.
- Mrs Irani said eight thousand women thigh reelers were identified for providing Buniyaad machines and five thousand women have already been supported under **Silk Samagra Phase -1**.
- She said that for the remaining three thousand thigh reelers, fund provision has been made.

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PM Modi Dedicates 7500th Janaushadhi Kendra to the nation at NEIGRIHMS, Shillong

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi called upon the people to use medicines from **JanAushadhi Kendra** saying that people have **saved more than 9,000 crore rupees** through these Kendras.
- Mr Modi said, the **Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Janaushadhi scheme** has relieved the poor of their high medical expenses.
- Jan Aushadhi centres are helping people from **poor and middle-class families to save around 3,600 crore rupees every year.**
- He said, Jan Aushadhi Suvidha Sanitary Pads are sold at just one rupee per pad.
- He was happy to note that the JanAushadhi scheme is helping people not only in medical treatment but also in generating employment for the youth.
- He pointed out that more than 1,000 JanAushadhi Kendras are being run by women.
- Mr Modi also dedicated the **7500th Janaushadhi Kendra at NEIGRIHMS, Shillong to the nation.** He said there were less than 100 JanAushadhi Kendras till 2014.
- He said the government is focused on opening 10,000 centres very soon.

All Helpline numbers of Railways merged into single number

- Indian Railway has integrated all railway help lines into single number **139** which is **Rail Madad Helpline** for quick grievance redressal and enquiry during the journey.
- As the new helpline number 139 will take over all the existing helpline numbers, **it will be easy for the passengers to remember this number and connect with Railways for all their needs during the travel.**
- The Ministry of Railways in a statement said that various Railway grievances helplines were discontinued last year and now, **Helpline number 182 would also be discontinued from 1st of April, 2021 and will be merged into 139.**
- The Helpline 139 will be available in twelve languages and passengers can opt for Interactive Voice Response System- IVRS or directly connect to call-centre executives by pressing the asterisk button.
- There is **no need for a smart phone to call on 139.**

'Maitri Setu' connecting India and Bangladesh – inaugurated by PM Modi

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate **Maitri Setu** between India and Bangladesh **through video conferencing.**
- Mr Modi will also inaugurate and lay the foundation stone of multiple infrastructure projects in Tripura during the event.
- The bridge Maitri Setu has been **built over Feni River** which flows between **Indian boundary in Tripura State and Bangladesh.**
- The name Maitri Setu symbolizes growing bilateral relations and **friendly ties between India and Bangladesh.**
- The construction was taken up by the **National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited** at a **project cost of 133 Crore rupees.**

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- The **1.9 Kilometres long bridge** joins Sabroom in India with Ramgarh in Bangladesh.
- It is poised to herald a new chapter for trade and people to people movement between India and Bangladesh.
- With this inauguration, Tripura is set to become the Gateway of North East with access to Chittagong Port of Bangladesh, which is just 80 Kilometres from Sabroom.

India's first-ever transgender community desk in Cyberabad

- The **Cyberabad Police** launched **India's first-ever 'Transgender Community Desk' at the Gachibowli Police Station in Hyderabad.**
- This desk is the **first-of-its-kind** gender-inclusive community policing initiatives in the country.
- The desk was formally inaugurated by **Cyberabad Police chief VC Sajjanar in a ceremony that was attended by over 200 transgender people.**
- It is the world's first-ever help desk for the transgender community and it will be managed by a Police Liaison Officer and a member of the transgender community who is designated as a community coordinator.
- It will also be the focal point for all grievance redressal among the transgender community in Cyberabad Commissionerate.
- Earlier in 2014, the Supreme Court recognised the transgender community as a third gender along with male and female and ruled that they have equal privilege over the fundamental rights enshrined in the Indian Constitution.

About transgender community desk:

- The transgender desk **will provide support to file cases in offences related to violence or discrimination against any transgender person.**
- Among other services, the desk will also provide counselling, legal aid, life-skills, soft skills training, job placements, and referral linkages to welfare schemes in partnership with the Department of Women & Child Welfare and District Legal Services Authority.
- The desk has been set up by the Cyberabad Commissionerate in collaboration with Society for Cyberabad Security Council and Prajwala.

Two of Passport Seva Kendras to be transformed as All Women PSKs

- On the occasion of International Women's Day, **Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan unveiled two of the Passport Seva Kendras, PSKs to be transformed as All Women PSKs.**
- One PSK is at RK Puram, Bhikaji Cama Place in New Delhi and another at Tripunithura in Cochin, Kerala.
- The Minister expressed that the Government is continuously working to create a balance between both men and women in various spheres of lives, be it professional or personal.

PM lists five pillars - to celebrate 75 years of Independence

- Chairing the first meeting of the National Committee to commemorate **75 years of independence**, Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav virtually, Prime Minister Narendra Modi informed that **5 pillars** have been decided for the **celebration of the 75 years.**

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- These are **Freedom Struggle, Ideas at 75, and Achievements at 75, Actions at 75 and Resolve at 75**.
- All these should include the ideas and feelings of the **130 crore indians**.
- The Prime Minister said this historical festival is about fulfilling the dreams of the freedom fighters, an attempt to elevate India to the height which they had wished.
- He asserted that the country is achieving things which were unthinkable a few years ago.
- He added that the celebration will be in accordance with the historical glory of India.

Centre announces More than 81 % accounts under Stand Up India Scheme belong to women entrepreneurs

- Government has said that more than 81 percent accounts under **Stand up India Scheme** and about **68 percent of loan accounts under MUDRA scheme belong to women entrepreneurs**.
- The Finance Ministry said, out of the total of over 41 crore accounts opened under Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana, **over 23 crore accounts** belong to women.
- The Ministry said, these Schemes have financially empowered women to lead a better life and chase their dreams of being an entrepreneur.

Govt declares 122 NACs identified under National Clean Air Programme

- **The Environment, Forest and Climate Change Ministry** has said that a total of 122 non attainment cities, NACs have been identified under the National Clean Air Programme.
- In a written reply in the Rajya Sabha, **Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change** said that city specific clean air action plans have been prepared and approved for 111 NACs.
- He informed that the government is taking several steps to curb the air pollution level in the country by cutting down vehicular and industrial pollution.
- He said, **more than two thousand 200 crore rupees** have been released in the financial year 2020-21 to tackle the problem of air pollution.
- He added that an amount of **two thousand 217 crore rupees** have been allocated for 42 urban centres for improvement of air quality.

Azadi ka Amrut Mahotsav: Several events to be held across country

- **Maharashtra government** will be holding various programmes related to **Azadi ka Amrut Mahotsav**.
- **Chief Minister Uddhav Thackray** will **flag-off Freedom Heritage walk** from August Kranti Maidan in Mumbai.
- Freedom fighters will also be felicitated in the programme.
- The Uttar Pradesh government is holding a series of events and activities as a part of the **'Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav'** to mark the beginning of nationwide celebrations of the **75th anniversary of India's independence**.
- Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will take part in an event at Kakori Shaheed Smarak in Lucknow while Governor Anandi Ben Patel will be present in Ballia.

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- In Madhya Pradesh, Azadi ka Amrut Mahotsav to mark 75 years of India's Independence is being launched in a grand manner.

Centre noted Digital News Publishers Association expresses satisfaction over Digital Media Ethics code

- **Digital News Publishers Association** has welcomed the **Information Technology (Guidelines for Intermediaries and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules of 2021**.
- Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar, the Association members expressed satisfaction over the Digital Media Ethics code notified by the Government on 25th of last month.
- Mr. Javadekar informed that few suggestions offered by the Digital News Publishers Association members during the meet have been duly noted.

Govt. Announced Apple's plan to produce I-phone 12 smartphones in India will create large numbers of jobs

- **IT and Communication Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad** said **Apple's plan to produce I-phone 12 Smartphones** in India will create jobs in large numbers.
- Appreciating the plan, Mr Prasad said the government's effort to make India a big hub of mobile and its components manufacturing is attracting global attention.
- Apple said that it is going to start I-phone 12 in India.
- The tech giant, which started manufacturing I-phones in India in 2017, has been shifting some of its productions from China to India.
- According to experts, shifting some of the production to India is not only in the interest of Apple, but also the Indian economy.

Labour Minister launches ESI Scheme with Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY in 113 districts

- **Union Minister for Labour and Employment Santosh Kumar Gangwar** launched the convergence of **ESI Scheme with Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, PM-JAY** in 113 districts of Chhatisgarh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.
- It was launched on the culmination day of Employees' State Insurance Corporation, ESIC, and Special Services Fortnight at New Delhi.
- The convergence will ensure that **1.35 crore ESI beneficiaries** in such districts avail cashless medical services through empanelled hospitals of Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY without any need of referral.
- To avail medical care, the Insured Worker or the beneficiary need to carry an **ESIC e-pehchan card or Health Passbook and Aadhar Card** with them.
- The list of districts and empaneled hospitals are available at www.esic.nic.in/ab-pm-jay.

Govt disband claims about Post offices charging Rs. 25 for cash withdrawal

- Government has dismissed a claim made on social media that from **1st of next month**, Post offices will charge **Rs. 25 on every cash withdrawal from its account**.
- The Press Information Bureau has termed the claim as fake.

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- It clarified that India Post has not announced any such charge on the withdrawal of money by account holders.

PM unveils Kindle version of Swami Chidbhavanandaji's Bhagavad Gita

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** will launch the **Kindle version of Swami Chidbhavanandaji's Bhagavad Gita** and also address the occasion through virtual mode.
- The event has been organised to commemorate the **sale of over five lakh copies** of the Swami Chidbhavanandaji's Bhagavad Gita.
- **Swami Chidbhavanandaji is the founder of Sri Ramakrishna Tapovanam Ashram at Thirupparaithurai, Tiruchirapalli in Tamil Nadu.**
- Swamiji has authored 186 books and all genres of literary composition.
- His scholarly work on the Gita is one of the most extensive books on the subject.
- Tamil version of the Gita with his commentaries was published in 1951 followed by the English in 1965.
- Its translations into Telugu, Odia, German and Japanese were undertaken by devotees.

Nitin Gadkari initiate two Technology Centres, three Extension Centres of MSME

- **Union Minister of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Nitin Gadkari** inaugurated the **two Technology Centres and three Extension Centres of MSME** virtually.
- The Technology Centres which were inaugurated have been set up at Visakhapatnam and Bhopal and the Extension Centres at Srinagar, Jaipur and Nagaur.
- The MSME has rolled out the Technology Centres Systems Programme to develop the competitiveness ecosystems of MSME in the country.
- **These Technology Centres** will train more than 16 thousand students annually and have infrastructure for training and production.
- Mr Gadkari also launched the **7 Udyam Express Mobile Vans** with a view to provide assistance to MSME in remote areas and also make aware the youth of rural areas about government's schemes.

APEDA launches its first virtual trade fair

- **The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority** launched its first virtual trade fair to boost export of agricultural and processed food products.
- The fair will conclude **Mar 12**.
- In the fair, basmati rice, non-basmati rice, millets, wheat, maize, groundnut and coarse grains have been displayed.
- **266 Indian and international buyers** from various countries have registered for the virtual fair.

Jal Jeevan Mission: Jal Shakti Minister to chair Conference of Ministers of States, UTs

- **Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat** will be chairing a Conference of States and UTs Ministers on **Jal Jeevan Mission** and review the progress made under the Mission.
- The conference is being organized to discuss planning, implementation and progress made so far as well as the way forward so that the remaining households in villages **get tap water connections** at the earliest.

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About the scheme:

- The Mission is a **flagship programme** of the Centre for providing tap water connection in every rural household by 2024.
- Since the announcement of Jal Jeevan Mission on 15th August 2019, significant progress has been made across the country.
- So far, more than 3.79 crore rural households have been provided with tap water connections.

I&B Minister Prakash Javadekar initiate Amrit Mahotsav exhibitions at six places

- **Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting Shri Prakash Javadekar** will inaugurate exhibitions at six places virtually.
- The six places are **Bangalore, Pune, Bhubaneswar, Patna, Moirang District in Manipur and Samba District in Jammu and Kashmir.**
- In addition, Shri Prakash Javadekar will also inaugurate an exhibition at the National Media Center in New Delhi.
- The exhibitions are being organised in pursuance of the vision of the Prime Minister and to contribute to the festive fervor to the **Azadi ka Amrut Mahotsav** as part of **India's 75th Independence Day celebrations.**
- Azadi ka Amrut Mahotsav commenced, 75 weeks prior to Independence Day 2022, and would continue till Independence Day 2023.

Centre announces new scheme for tourist vehicle operators

- The **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways** has announced a **new scheme for tourist vehicle operators.**
- Any tourist vehicle operator may apply for an All India tourist authorization and permit through online mode.
- It will be issued, after relevant documents are submitted and fees deposited, within **30 days of submission of such applications.**

About the new scheme:

- The **new set of rules**, to be known as, All India Tourist Vehicles Authorization and Permit Rules, 2021, will be applicable from **1st April this year.**
- All existing permits shall continue to be in force during their validity.
- The new rules for permits are expected to go a long way in promoting tourism across the states.
- It will also consolidate a central database and fees of **all such authorization** which might give a sense of tourist movements, scope for improvement and promotion of tourism.

Govt announces linking of OTPRMS certificates with DigiLocker

- **Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank** has announced linking of **Online Teacher Pupil Registration Management System, OTPRMS certificates with DigiLocker.**
- This has been done in order to ensure **hassle free access** to verified OTPRMS Certificates.
- The issued certificates will automatically be transferred to **DigiLocker** and the same may be traced at the website of National Council for Teacher Education and DigiLocker.

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- The Minister also informed that the **registration fee of 200 rupees** payable for obtaining OTRMS Certificates, issued by NCTE has been waived off.
- This will enable all stakeholders across India to be digitally empowered facilitating **ease of doing business**.

I&B Minister inaugurates Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav exhibitions at 6 places

- **Information and Broadcasting Minister, Prakash Javadekar** inaugurated the exhibition to **commemorate 75 years of India's Independence**, Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav at six places in the country virtually.
- The **six places** where Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav exhibitions were inaugurated are **Jammu, Imphal, Patna, Bhubaneshwar, Pune and Bengaluru**.

About Exhibition:

- Mr. Javadekar said, Independence was achieved after a lot of sacrifices by the freedom fighters.
- He said through exhibition people will come to know about the freedom struggle.
- He also said that the basis of the objective to celebrate Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav by the Prime Minister is to connect people and make them aware of the freedom struggle.
- Secretary Information and Broadcasting, Mr. Amit Khare, Principal Director General of Bureau of Outreach, Mr. Satyendra Prakash, and Principal Director General of PIB, Mr. Jaideep Bhatnagar and other senior officials were present on the occasion.

India's first centralised AC railway terminal in Bengaluru to operational soon

- India's **first centralised air-conditioned (AC) railway terminal** has been built at **Baiyappanahalli in Bengaluru**.
- Named after '**Bharat Ratna Sir M Visvesvaraya**' one of the foremost civil engineers, the AC railway terminal is set to become operational soon.
- It has been built at an estimated cost of **Rs 314 crore**.
- The Byappanahalli terminal is the third coach terminal named after Bharat Ratna Sir M Visvesvaraya, sanctioned in 2015-16.

Union Culture Minister Prahlad Singh inaugurated digitization of 4.5 Crore pages of Records

- **On March 11, 2021**, Union Culture Minister **Prahlad Singh Patel** inaugurated **Digitisation of 4 crore 50 lakh pages of Records and Exhibition on Mahatma Gandhi & the Non-Cooperation Movement**.
- On the occasion of **131st foundation day** of the National Archives of India Mr. Patel launched the process of digitisation
- The exhibition on 'Mahatma Gandhi and the Non-Cooperation Movement' is based on the original documents.
- This exhibition will run till **15 April 2021**.
- The National Archives currently has a collection of over **18.00 crore pages**, about 4 crore 50 lakh pages will be digitised in the first phase which is expected to get over in the next three years.

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- Public records include files recognized by the President of India, volumes, maps, bills, treaties, rare manuscripts, ancient records, personal papers, cartographic records, important collections of gazettes and gazetteers, census records, Parliamentary and Assembly debates, literature, travelogue etc.

WCD Ministry organises seminar with District Officers

- **The Ministry of Women and Child Development** organized a seminar with **District Officers from Aspirational Districts and Districts with high rates of crime against women and children.**
- Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani addressed the seminar.
- Later talking to reporters, Ms Irani said, during the seminar discussions were held on **important umbrella schemes Poshan Abhiyaan, Mission Shakti and Mission Vatsalya.**
- She said, discussions were also held on ways to provide mobile Creches in rural areas for women engaged in the construction and agriculture sector.
- The Minister said, her Ministry is also considering integrating the **Women and Child helplines** for quick assistance to distressed women and children and also for better redressal of grievances.
- District Officers from **112 Aspirational Districts** and **officials from 100 Districts** with high rates of crime against women and children attended the seminar.

Govt notify that LIC is not being privatized in Lok Sabha

- The Government said that **Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC)** has not been privatized.
- Replying to a supplementary question during the Question Hour in Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Finance, **Anurag Thakur** mentioned, the government is bringing in the IPO to usher in transparency and valuation.
- He said, **the IPO will increase the investment in LIC.**
- He said the decision on percentage for shareholders will be taken later.
- Mr. Thakur said, the IPO will benefit the country and shareholders as well.

In Lok Sabha Mines & Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill 2021 introduced

- **The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill 2021** was introduced in the Lok Sabha.
- **Coal Minister Pralhad Joshi** introduced the Bill which amends the **Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act 1957.**
- The legislation seeks to remove the distinction between captive and merchant mines.
- The Bill empowers the Central Government to issue directions regarding composition and utilisation of funds maintained by the District Mineral Foundation.
- The Bill aims at fully harnessing the potential of the mineral sector, increasing employment and investment in the mining sector.
- This will also help in increasing the revenue of the States.
- The legislation will also help in increasing the production and time bound operationalization of mines in the country.

In Lok Sabha Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Bill 2021 introduced

- **Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Bill 2021** was introduced in the Lok Sabha.

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- Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani introduced the Bill that seeks to amend the **Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015**.
- The amendments include authorizing District Magistrate including Additional District Magistrate to issue adoption orders to ensure speedy disposal of cases and enhance accountability.
- Defining eligibility parameters for appointment of **Child Welfare Committee members and categorizing previously undefined offences as serious offences** are some of the other aspects of the Bill.
- The **Marine Aids to Navigation Bill 2021** was also introduced in the House.
- The Bill provides for the development, maintenance and management of aids to navigation in India for training and certification of operators of aids to navigation.
- The Bill was introduced by **Minister of State for Ports and Shipping Manshukh Mandaviya**.
- The **Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill 2021**, the **Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill 2021** and the **National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (Amendment) Bill 2021** were also introduced in the Lok Sabha.

CCEA approves Revised Cost Estimate of Scheme for Distribution of power in Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim

- The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs** has approved the Revised Cost Estimate of **Comprehensive Scheme for Strengthening of Transmission and Distribution of power in Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim**.
- It has been approved at an estimated cost of over 9 thousand 129 crore rupees.

Main objective of the scheme:

- The Government commitment for the total economic development of **Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim** and to strengthen the **Intra-State Transmission and Distribution Infrastructure** in the states by providing grid connectivity to remote distant locations.
- The scheme is being implemented through **POWERGRID**, a Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) under Ministry of Power in association with Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh.
- It is targeted to be commissioned in phased manner by **December 2021**.

Cabinet approves bill to set up Development Finance Institution (DFI) with initial capital of Rs 20 thousand crore

- The Union Cabinet has approved a bill to set up **Development Finance Institution (DFI)** with an **initial capital infusion of 20 thousand crore rupees**.
- The bill will be tabled in Parliament during the current Budget Session.
- DFI is expected to raise long-term funds for infrastructure development projects in the country.
- Briefing reporters after the Cabinet meeting, **Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman** said the initial grant to the DFI will be 5 thousand crore rupees and additional increments of grants will be made within the limit of 5 thousand crore rupees.

About Development Finance Institution:

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- A Development Financial institution (DFI) is defined as “an institution endorsed or supported by Government of India primarily to provide development/Project finance to one or more sectors or sub-sectors of the economy.
- These DFIs are also known as **Development banks**.

Development financial institutions are:

- National Development Banks such as IDBI, SIDBI, ICICI, IFCI, IRBI, and IDFC.
- Sector-specific financial institutions such as TFCI, EXIM Bank, NABARD, HDFC, and NHB.
- Investment Institutions such as LIC, GIC and UTI.
- State-level institutions such as State Finance Corporations and SIDCs.

Cabinet passes bill - outer limit of 24 weeks for Medical Termination of Pregnancy

- Parliament has passed the **Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2020** with the Rajya Sabha approving.
- The Lok Sabha had passed the bill in March last year.
- The Bill provides for an **outer limit of 24 weeks** for **medical termination of pregnancy**.
- The limit is in sync with the advancements in medical technology that allows for the removal of fetuses at a relatively advanced stage of pregnancy.

Medical Termination of Pregnancy:

- **Medical termination of pregnancy (MTP) or medical abortion** is the use of abortion pills for terminating a pregnancy.
- MTP is feasible only up to **9 weeks of pregnancy**, and after that surgical termination takes over.
- MTP is one of the safest methods of terminating an unwanted pregnancy.

Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act 1971:

- The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971.
- An Act to provide for the termination of certain pregnancies by registered Medical Practitioners and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Cabinet nods to shut down Handicrafts and Handlooms Export Corporation

- The Union **cabinet** gave its nod to **shut down** loss-making **Handicrafts and Handlooms Export Corp.** of India Ltd (**HHEC**), and to offer voluntary retirement to all its 65 employees. The **corporation** has been continuously incurring losses since 2015-16 and not earning sufficient income to meet its running expenses.

About Handicrafts and Handlooms Export Corporation:

- **Handicrafts and Handlooms Export Corporation of India** is an agency of **Ministry of Textiles, Government of India** established in 1958 with main objectives to undertake exports of handicrafts, handlooms products, khadi and products of village industries from India and to undertake special promotional measures.
- On the 17th of March 2021, the Government of India approved the closure of Handicrafts and Handlooms Export Corporation of India.

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Nitin Gadkari to make statement regarding 'Vehicles Scrapping Policy'

- **Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari** will make a statement regarding '**Vehicles Scrapping Policy**' in both the Houses of Parliament.
- Besides it, in business of the **Lok Sabha, Appropriation Bill, 2021**, Discussion and Voting on Demands for Grants in respect of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir for 2021-22 and Demands for Grants on Account in respect of the Union Territory of Puducherry for 2021-22 and the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order (Amendment) Bill, 2021 are listed.
- In the business schedule of Rajya Sabha, the **Insurance (Amendment) Bill, 2021** and Discussion on the working of Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Food Processing Industries are listed.

Vehicle scrappage policy in India:

- The **vehicle scrappage policy** has been devised to promote sales of new vehicles with improved fuel efficiency and low pollution levels, as well as to **slash India's Rs 10 lakh crore expenditure on crude imports**.
- Around 1 crore aging vehicles are set to be scrapped once the policy is implemented, according to Gadkari.

Doodh Duronto special trains transport 7 crore litres of milk to Delhi –current FY Report

- **Doodh Duronto special trains** have **transported seven crore litres of Milk to National Capital, New Delhi** in the current financial year 2020-21, which is the highest ever transportation since its commencement.
- Transportation of Milk from Renigunta of Andhra Pradesh was started in the year 2011-12 and initially Milk Tankers were attached to Regular Superfast trains to serve the purpose.
- Since then, transportation of Milk has been done on a regular basis, transporting around 2 to 3 crore litres in every financial year.
- There has been an increase in demand as the years passed by and in the year 2019-20, 4.4 crore litres were transported.
- But in the month of April 2020, due to Covid lockdown, when all passenger trains came to a halt, Milk transportation was a challenging task to the Zone.

About Doodh Duronto:

- **Doodh Duronto** specials are run normally with six Milk tankers, each having a **capacity of 40,000 liters i.e., totalling to 2.40 lakh liters of milk in a train**.
- So far, around 296 trips of the special trains have been operated with 1,753 milk tankers duly transporting **7 crore liters of milk** in the current financial year, which is the highest ever loading in any financial year since inception.

Insurance Amendment Bill, 2021 passed in Rajya Sabha - FDI limit increased

- The **Rajya Sabha has passed the Insurance (Amendment) Bill, 2021**.
- It seeks to amend the Insurance Act, 1938 which will increase the limit of foreign investment allowed in Indian insurance companies.
- The Bill provides to **increase the foreign direct investment limit from existing 49 percent to 74 percent**.

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- It also has a provision for removal of restrictions on ownership and control of the insurance companies.
- Replying to a discussion, **Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman** said, that a higher **FDI limit of 74 per cent** is not a compulsion for every insurance company, as it sets only an upper limit.
- She clarified that increasing the limit does not mean automatic foreign investment to that level to all companies, and each and every company will decide the limit of investment.
- Responding to members' questions with regard to reservation policy, the minister assured the House that the Government is fully committed to social justice and existing reservation policy will continue in the insurance sector.

AIM, NITI Aayog, AWS announce new initiatives in india

- **Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog, and Amazon Web Services** announced new initiatives to strengthen the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem in India.
- This will be done by empowering school students with cloud computing skills, and enabling entrepreneurs to **build innovative education technology solutions** on the cloud.
- A Statement of Intent was signed between NITI Aayog and Amazon Internet Services Private Limited, which undertakes the resale and marketing of Amazon Web Services Cloud services in India.
- Innovation Mission will leverage Amazon Web Services Educate, which is Amazon's global program that provides resources for students and educators to accelerate cloud-related learning.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurates Advanced High Resolution Microscopy Facility

- **Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare, Science & technology Dr. Harsh Vardhan** inaugurated the **new Advanced High Resolution Microscopy Facility at National Agri-Food Biotechnology Institute (NABI) and Unveiled the 4 Star GRIHA Certification of Center of Innovative and Applied Bioprocessing (CIAB) Lab and Admin Building at Mohali in Punjab.**
- Both **NABI & CIAB** are autonomous institutes under Dept. of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science & Technology.
- Following the gathering Dr. Harsh Vardhan urged both the institutes to address the problems of hunger & malnutrition and to bring nutritional revolution in the country.
- Minister emphasized that with government impetus on doubling the farmer's income by 2022-23, NABI and CIAB's roles are crucial to achieve this ambitious goal.

PM Modi to launch Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain campaign

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** will virtually launch **Jal Shakti Abhiyan : Catch the Rain campaign** on the occasion of World Water Day.
- The **theme** of the campaign is '**Catch the rain, where it falls, when it falls**'.
- In the presence of the Prime Minister, the signing of the historic **Memorandum of Agreement between the Minister of Jal Shakti and the Chief Ministers of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh** to implement the Ken Betwa Link Project will also take place.
- This is the first project of the National Perspective Plan for interlinking of rivers.

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- This project involves transfer of water from the Ken to the Betwa River through the construction of **Daudhan Dam** and **a canal linking** the two rivers.
- It will provide annual irrigation of 10.62 lakh hectare, drinking water supply to about 62 lakh people and also generate 103 MegaWatt of hydropower.
- The Project will be of immense benefit to the water starved region of Bundelkhand, especially to the districts of Panna, Tikamgarh, Chhatarpur, Sagar, Damoh, Datia, Vidisha, Shivpuri and Raisen of Madhya Pradesh and Banda, Mahoba, Jhansi and Lalitpur of Uttar Pradesh.

Transport Ministry advises depts, organizations to strengthen security

- **The Road, Transport and Highways Ministry** has received reports from Indian **Computer Emergency Response Team - CERT-In** regarding targeted intrusion activities directed towards Indian Transport sector with possible malicious intentions.
- The Ministry has advised departments and organizations under the transport sector to strengthen the security posture of their infrastructure.
- It said, **National Informatics Centre (NIC), National Highways Authority of India, NHIDCL, State PWDs, Testing agencies and Automobile manufacturers** have been requested to conduct the security audit of the entire IT system by **CERT-In certified agencies** on a regular basis and take all actions as per their recommendations.
- It also said the audit report and the **Action Taken Report** to be regularly submitted to the Ministry.

Dept of Posts conducts Universal Postal Union 2021 - International Letter Writing Competition

- **Department of Posts** is organizing **Universal Postal Union 2021 International Letter Writing Competition** for Young People in all States of the country through the Postal Circle Offices.
- The **subject** for the Competition is **"Write a letter to a family member about your experience with COVID-19."**
- It will be open to school going **children up-to the age of 15 years.**
- The Competition will be conducted in the Schools and Centres by the concerned Postal Circle of the State.
- The candidates are also given the option for participating in the Competition at their home without their physical appearance at the Schools.
- candidates who wish to participate from home must send their entries through the mode of Speed Post to the designated Nodal Officer of the concerned Postal Circle Office along with credentials.

Center report More than 57,000 lakh rupees disbursed under Atal Pension Yojana till February 2021

- **Government** has said that more than **57 thousand lakh rupees** have been disbursed under **Atal Pension Yojana till February this year.**
- **Minister of State for Finance and Corporate Affairs Anurag Singh Thakur** mentioned this in a written reply to a question in Lok Sabha.
- He said, the Atal Pension Yojana is a **Government Scheme launched on 9th May, 2015**, and became operational with **effect from 1st June, 2015.**

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- He said, It is open to all citizens of India **between 18 to 40 years of age**, having a savings bank account in a bank or post office.
- The benefits of the scheme will arise to the subscribers on **attaining the age of 60 years** and under the scheme, five pension plan slabs are available from one thousand to five thousand rupees.
- The Minister further stated that the **Central Government co-contributes 50 per cent of the total contribution or one thousand rupees per annum**, whichever is lower, for those subscribers who have joined the scheme **during the period 1st June, 2015 to 31st March, 2016**.

More than 23 lakh loans sanctioned to beneficiaries under PM SVANidhi scheme

- Government has said that more than 23 lakh loans have been sanctioned to the beneficiaries under the **Pradhan Mantri Street Vendors, Atma Nirbhar Nidhi Scheme - PM SVANidhi**.
- Minister of State for Finance Anurag Singh Thakur said this in a written reply to a question in Lok Sabha.
- He said, **over 18 lakh loans** have been disbursed to the beneficiaries.
- The **PM SVANidhi scheme** was launched on **1st June 2020**, with the objective to facilitate collateral free working capital loan up to ten thousand rupees, to about **50 lakh street vendors** across the country whose businesses had been adversely affected due to lockdown.
- The scheme also provides for incentives in the form of interest subsidy at the rate of seven per cent per annum on regular repayment of loan and cash-back reward upto one hundred rupees per month on undertaking prescribed digital transactions.

Indian Railways: massive drive against smoking and carriage of inflammable launched

- **Indian Railways** have launched a massive **drive against smoking and carriage of inflammable material** through Railways in the view of incidents of fire resulting in loss of property and danger to life in **various Zonal Railways**.
- The drive has been launched with legal action from 31st of this month.
- It may be **continued till 30th April**.
- The drive is aimed to educate all the stakeholders about precautions to be taken against fire incidents like enforcing **"No Smoking"**, and preventing carriage of inflammable material through rail.
- The message is being imparted through direct interaction, distribution of leaflets, pamphlets, pasting of stickers, conducting **Nukkad Natak**s, announcement through **PA system** at stations, and advertisement in print, electronic and social media.

INS Jalashwa with 1000 MT rice, one lakh Hydroxychloroquine tablets Reached Madagascar's Port Ehoala

- As part of **Mission Sagar - IV**, Indian Naval Ship **Jalashwa** arrived at **Port Ehoala, Madagascar** to deliver a consignment of **one thousand Metric Tonne of rice and one lakh Hydroxychloroquine tablets** in response to an appeal made by Madagascar for assistance to deal with natural calamities.
- An official ceremony for handing over the aid from the Government of India to the Government of Madagascar was held.

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- The ceremony was attended by **Prime Minister of Madagascar Christian Ntsay** while the Indian side was represented by **Mr Abhay Kumar, Ambassador of India to Madagascar** and **Captain Pankaj Chauhan, Commanding Officer INS Jalashwa**.
- The Ministry of Defence in a statement said that this is the second visit of an Indian Navy ship to the island country within a span of one year.
- Earlier, as part of Mission Sagar-I, In May-June 2020, the Indian Navy had delivered essential medicines to the nation.

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari reports Bamboo industry in India will be worth Rs. 25 to 30 thousand crore

- **MSME Minister Nitin Gadkari** expressed hope that with integrated efforts from all stakeholders, bamboo industry in India will be **worth 25 to 30 thousand crore rupees**.
- He was addressing a virtual exhibition on **Bamboo Technology, Products and Services** through video conferencing.
- Mr. Gadkari called for multiple uses of Bamboo to increase its demand and plantation.
- The minister said that use of jute and coir mattresses is soon going to be made mandatory for all NHAI roads.
- He said that bamboo can also be used to make **bio-CNG and charcoal and IITs** can be roped in to conduct further research on this with help of special grants from Bamboo Mission.
- The Minister assured all assistance from the Ministry of MSME for any scheme related to promotion of bamboo.
- The Minister said that there is need more research, more appropriate approach for product development and market support.
- He also said that he is trying to get a **50 per cent subsidy from Railways** for bamboo and bamboo sticks.

Parliament passes Finance Bill 2021

- **Parliament has passed the Finance Bill, 2021** with the **Rajya Sabha** returning it to Lok Sabha.
- With this, Parliament has completed all the budgetary exercise.
- **For tax exemption raised on interest earned on PF contribution from 2.5 lakh to 5 lakh rupees per annum**
- Replying to a discussion on the Finance Bill, 2021, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the **NDA rule has provided corruption free governance** and brought Indian economy out of policy paralysis and fragile five.
- She alleged that the economy was mismanaged under **UPA rule and the Narendra Modi government had got a legacy** of high inflation which has been checked.
- **Mrs Sitharaman** also said NPA has brought down to around **8 lakh 99 thousand crore rupees by March 2020**.
- Talking about GST, the Minister said GST compensation due to states prior to COVID has all been paid.
- She informed that 30 thousand crore rupees of GST compensation will be released to states this month.
- She also elaborated several measures taken to provide relief to **the common man during the COVI-19 pandemic**.
- When the Finance Minister alleged that the West Bengal government has deprived farmers of benefits under the central government's PM Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme, the House witnessed heated arguments between the treasury bench and TMC members.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

NHAI to develop world class 'Wayside Amenities' - more than 600 locations

- In a major move to improve commuters' experience on National Highways for both passengers and truckers, the **National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)** will develop world class '**Wayside Amenities**' at more than 600 locations across 22 states in the next five years.
- Out of these, **130 are targeted for development in 2021-22.**
- NHAI has already invited bids to develop 120 such wayside amenities.
- As per plan, wayside amenities will be developed **every 30 to 50 kilometer** along the **current and upcoming Highways and Expressways.**
- **The amenities will include numerous facilities for passengers such as** Fuel Station, Electric Charging Facilities, Food Court, Retail Shops, ATM, and Toilets with shower facility, Children Playing Area, Clinic, Village Haat for local handicrafts etc.
- Keeping in view the specific requirements of truckers, separate '**Truckers Blocks**' will be developed at large amenities that will include Truck and Trailer Parking, Auto Workshop, Truckers Dormitory, Cooking and Washing area, Toilets with showers, Clinic, Eateries and Retail shops .

In Lok Sabha - Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India (Amendment) Bill 2021 introduced

- **Civil Aviation minister Hardeep Singh Puri** introduced the **Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India (Amendment) Bill 2021** in the Lok Sabha.
- The Bill proposes to amend the definition of major airport so as to extend its scope to determine the tariff for a group of airports.
- It will encourage **development of smaller airports.**

Education Minister unveiled more than one hundred comic books

- **Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank** has launched more than one hundred comic books created by teachers and students of **CBSE schools and curated by NCERT.**
- The comics are aligned with topics of NCERT textbooks and have specific storyline and characters.
- It has been created in a linear progression which will help to understand basic concepts and decrease the learning gaps.
- These comics can be accessed **online on DIKSHA web portal and DIKSHA app.**
- Mr Pokhriyal noted that this innovative initiative will help in increasing the cultural and social sensitivity in our children while imparting knowledge.

Govt to roll out GPS based toll collection system

- The government is working to roll out a **GPS based toll collection system** and introducing **E-Highway from Delhi to Mumbai in the upcoming months.**
- This was stated by the **Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadakari** in the Lok Sabha.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

- Mr. Gadkari said that toll collection through the fast tag has reached to **93 per cent** across the country which has resulted in 10 thousand crore more toll collection in comparison to previous year.
- He said use of fast tag has also reduced the **waiting time on the toll booths**.
- He added that introduction of GPS based toll collection system will facilitate smooth movement of traffic, bring transparency and remove the old mechanism of toll collection system.
- **Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari** has said that the thrust in road building will provide jobs and sustainable growth of the economy.
- Addressing a National Conference on Road Infrastructure in New Delhi, Mr Gadkari said that around **64.5 per cent of the goods and nearly 90 percent of passenger traffic** use the road network to commute.
- He said, the road infrastructure has a direct and indirect effect on sustainability of growth and overall development of the country.
- The Minister also stressed on the need to move towards public transport on electricity and exhorted the industry to come forward in this direction.

More than 68 lakh 33 thousand beneficiaries benefited maternity benefits in 2020

- **More than 68 lakh 33 thousand beneficiaries** were provided maternity benefits in 2020 under the **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, PMMVY**.
- **Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani** said this in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha.
- The government implements the scheme with the objectives of providing partial compensation for the wage loss in terms of cash incentive so that the woman can take adequate **rest before and after delivery of the first child**.
- Under the scheme, the government **also provides cash incentive to improve health seeking behaviour amongst the Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers**.

Pradhan Mantri Matri Vandana Yojana:

- **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana** is a maternity benefit program run by the government of India.
- It was **introduced in 2017** and is implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- It is a conditional cash transfer scheme for pregnant and lactating **women of 19 years of age or above for the first live birth**.
- **Launch year:** 2010
- **Status:** Merged into National Food Security Act, 2013

Swarna Jayanti scholarship for youths of Bangladesh announced

- **Prime Minister Modi** announced **Swarna Jayanti scholarship** for youths of Bangladesh.
- The **Swarna Jayanti** Fellowship is a research fellowship awarded annually by the Department of Science and Technology of India.
- It is given for the notable and outstanding research by young scientists, applied or fundamental, in biology, chemistry, environmental science, engineering, mathematics, medicine and physics.

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- Referring to the completion of **50 years of diplomatic relationship between India and Bangladesh**, Mr. Modi also announced to invite 50 entrepreneurs of Bangladesh to visit India and join start-up initiatives and meet Indian venture capitalists.
- Remembering the struggle of Independence by Bangladeshi people, Prime Minister Modi also shared his personal contribution during that struggle.
- He said that the struggle for independence of Bangladesh was one of the first movements that he participated in.
- He said that he was **20 or 22 years old** when he and his colleagues had organized Satyagraha for Bangladesh's freedom.

Hyderabad-based Maithri Aquatech made-up 'World's First Mobile Water from Air Kiosk' at Vizag Smart City

- **Hyderabad-based startup**, Maithri Aquatech has set up the **world's first mobile water from air kiosk** and water knowledge centre in the **smart city of Visakhapatnam**, in Andhra Pradesh.
- This innovative water kiosk is such that the potable water is harvested from the air instead of depending on scarce groundwater and surface water resources.
- This initiative is supported by **Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation** and project **SEWAH (Sustainable Enterprises for Water and Health)**, an alliance between **USAID** and **SWN (Safe Water Network)**.
- The kiosk will provide clean, **mineral-enriched potable water** harvested from the air by making use of **Maithri Aquatech's own Meghdoot solution** as a source to generate water.
- Apart from this, the kiosk will also function as a **Water Knowledge Resource Centre by creating awareness** and imparting necessary information to members of the local underserved communities as well as nearby schools on the benefits of good water, sanitation and hygiene (**WASH**) practices.

Health Minister unveiled 'Tribal TB Initiative' in pursuit of TB Mukht Bharat

- **Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan** launched 'Tribal TB Initiative' in pursuit of TB Mukht Bharat.
- He said that the government accords top priority to ensuring **Universal Access** to free treatment and care for TB across the country.
- The Minister said, over **ten crore tribal population** is living with a huge diversity in their population dynamics.
- He said, the government has already increased the Budget allocation for TB in India four-fold in the last five years.
- **Dr Harsh Vardhan** said, the Union Territories of Lakshadweep and district of Badgam in Jammu and Kashmir have been declared TB Free on World TB Day.
- During the function, **Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda** was also present.

Skill Development Ministry invites Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship applications till 27th March

- **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship** in association with **9 IIMS** has invited applications for **Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship** till 27th of March.
- The fellowship is a **two-year blended program** consisting of classroom sessions at IIMs and a unique opportunity to promote skill planning and development in district economies.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

- Following the success of the pilot cohort, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship announced the launch of **'Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship' (MGNF) 2021-23** in collaboration with IIM Ahmedabad, IIM Bangalore, IIM-Jammu, IIM Kozhikode, IIM Lucknow, IIM Nagpur, IIM Ranchi, IIM Udaipur and IIM Visakhapatnam.
- It is a unique opportunity for young, dynamic individuals to combine classroom sessions at IIM with engagement in the district economies to promote skill development and skill planning.
- Launched last year, the implementation of the programme has been a great success and has garnered appreciation from various stakeholders.
- The Fellowship, 2021-23, has been rolled out nationally in **more than 660 districts across India**.

'Two Mobile Medical Vans' - Centre, Maharashtra Public Health Dept dedicate it to the nation

- Public Health Department, Maharashtra and National Health Mission, government of India dedicated **'Two air conditioned Mobile Medical Vans'** to the nation in Jalna district of Maharashtra.
- The program was inaugurated by State Health Minister Rajesh Tope with a green flag.
- **Rs 20 lakh cost van** will be used to provide health facilities and state-of-the-art clinics in remote areas of the district.
- The van will provide information on health schemes of the Central and State Governments and all types of check-ups, obstetrics, other treatments etc.
- **Health Minister Rajesh Tope** has said that 20 districts have been selected under this national campaign and this will make it easier to implement the national health campaign in rural areas.
- He further said that two air-conditioned vehicles have been provided for Jalna district, through which the poorer will be given **100 percent free treatment**.
- It has been ensured that 60 patients will be examined.
- Daily efforts will be made to improve the quality of health services under the National Health Mission.
- **Former Minister Arjun Khotkar, MLA Kailash Gorantyal, Zilla Parishad Chief Executive Officer Pratap Sawade, District Surgeon Archana Bhosale** were present on the occasion.

Prasar Bharati run DD Free Dish touches 40 million subscribers

- **Prasar Bharati CEO, Shashi Shekhar Vempati** has expressed happiness that the public broadcaster-run **Direct to Home (DTH) platform DD Free Dish** has crossed 40 million subscribers.
- According to **FICCI-EY Media Entertainment Annual Report for 2021**, DD Free Dish has an estimated base of more than 40 million households.
- The growth has been attributed to less expensive television sets, economic issues, launch of the **DD Retro Channel** and return of big broadcasters to the Free Dish platform.
- DD Free Dish has also become a second set top box within the home, used when there are no large events on television in some cases.
- Free Dish distributors have mentioned year on year growth in sales as well as the inability to keep up with demand due to a shortage of **China-manufactured chipsets**.

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- Television households will continue to grow at over 5 percent till 2025, driven by connected TVs which could cross **40 million by 2025** and DD Free Dish could cross 50 million.
- DD Free Dish, is a multi-channel Free-To-Air Direct to Home service of Prasar Bharati.

Inauguration of new building of Bombay High Court in Goa - addresses by Union Law Minister

- **Union Minister of Law and Justice Ravi Shankar Prasad** has said that whenever various types of challenges arose in India, Judiciary always came with an apt and competent answer to it.
- He was speaking in the event of inauguration of a new building of the **Bombay High Court at Goa in Porvorim near Panaji**.
- Digital technology did a stellar performance during Covid pandemic in as much as **82 lakh cases** were heard virtually in various courts, Minister Prasad added further.
- There has to be a robust answer on the claims regarding environment and development, he added.
- Chief Justice of India Sharad Bobde after inaugurating the building said that the bench at Goa always maintained the highest standards and made significant contribution to development of law.
- New building is a sign of a new time, he added.

Education Minister inaugurates Anandam The Center for Happiness in IIM Jammu

- **Union Minister of Education Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'** inaugurated "**Ānandam: The Center for Happiness**" virtually on March 30, 2021 at **Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu**.
- The name 'Ānandam' is taken from the Indian wisdom tradition where the pure consciousness is known as "anandam".
- The Centre will work for the well-being of all by incorporating happiness in the academic curriculum of students, which includes knowing the truth, doing well and enjoying the beauty around.
- **Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha**, Founder of Art of Living Foundation, **Sri Sri Ravi Shankar** also virtually graced the occasion.
- Pokhriyal congratulated IIM Jammu for the new venture and defined the need for Ānandam.
- He said that incorporating happiness in the academic curriculum of students is a very crucial step towards empowering the nation.

I&B Minister flagged off DEMU train from Phaltan to Pune

- **Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar** flagged off **DEMU train from Phaltan to Pune via Lonand through video conferencing**.
- The new train will provide better transport facilities to the people of the region.
- Mr Javadekar mentioned, Railway has taken several measures to provide better facilities to commuters.
- This includes introduction of **Bio-toilets, wifi facility and simplified reservation on IRCTC**.
- He said more **than five thousand Railway stations** have been provided with **Wi-Fi** which enable passengers to access the **World Wide Web** and opened their horizon of knowledge.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

Govt make 22 new routes in operational in last three days under UDAN scheme

- **Government has operationalised 22 new routes** in the last three days under the UDAN scheme.
- This is part of Endeavour to connect the unconnected regions.
- Out of these new routes, six routes have been operationalised in North-East India.
- The **Regional Connectivity Scheme - Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik**, UDAN is a flagship scheme of the Ministry of Civil Aviation envisaged to make air travel affordable and widespread in the country.
- The scheme intends to boost inclusive national economic growth, employment opportunities and air transport infrastructure development across the nation.
- Till date, **347 routes have been operationalised** under the UDAN scheme.
- The Civil Aviation Ministry said the first direct flight from Shillong, Meghalaya to Agartala in Tripura under the UDAN scheme was flagged off.
- The flight operation on **Shillong - Silchar route** was successfully commenced.

EAM S Jaishankar meets Afghanistan Prez Ashraf Ghani

- **External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar met Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani** and had a discussion on the Afghan peace process.
- Dr Jaishankar and Mr Ghani are in Dushanbe to attend the **ninth Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process conference**.
- Tajikistan is hosting the conference which is focused on strengthening a regional and international consensus for Afghan peace.
- **Afghan Foreign Minister Haneef Atmar** visited India and **held-back-to-back talks** with Dr Jaishankar and NSA Ajit Doval.
- In New Delhi, the Afghan Foreign Minister during his meeting with Dr Jaishankar on the peace process, the two sides reviewed the **Troika Peace Meeting** in Moscow and assessed the final declaration of the meeting as positive for strengthening and advancing the peace process.

PM Modi launches new version of 'Exam Warriors'

- The new version of **Exam Warriors written by Prime Minister Narendra Modi** is now available with many new mantras for students as well as parents.
- It is available at **retail stores as well as online**.
- The Exam Warriors module is also available on the **NaMo App**.
- Mr Modi said, the new edition of the book has been enriched with valuable inputs from **students, parents and teachers**.
- Substantive new parts have been added that would especially interest the parents and teachers.
- He said the book reaffirms the need to remain **stress free before an exam**.
- The **Prime Minister** added that it has many interactive activities for students and parents.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

Jal Jeevan Mission achieves new milestone - tap water to over 4 crore rural households

- **Jal Jeevan Mission** has achieved a new milestone of providing over **4 Crore rural households** with tap water supply.
- The mission was announced by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** on **15th August, 2019**, with the aim to provide tap water supply to every rural home by 2024.
- Now, **7.24 Crore**, more than **1/3rd** of rural households are getting potable water through taps.
- Goa has become the first State in the country to provide 100 percent tap water supply followed by Telangana and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- The untiring efforts of States and UTs have helped **Jal Jeevan Mission** provide assured tap water supply to **every family living in 56 districts and over 86 thousand villages**.
- States and UTs are now competing with each other and focusing on the target to ensure that every household in the country gets safe drinking water, so that no one is left out.

Lok Sabha TV & Rajya Sabha TV merged into one single entity, Sansad TV

- The **Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha Television channels** that broadcast the proceedings of the upper and lower Houses of Parliament, respectively, have been merged into a single entity.
- Retired Indian Administrative Service officer Ravi Capoor was appointed the chief executive officer of the channel for one year on **March 1**.
- The decision is in line with the proposals of a panel headed by former Prasar Bharati chairperson **A Surya Prakash**.
- The panel was set up by **Rajya Sabha chairman M Venkaiah Naidu** after consulting with **Speaker Om Birla** in **November 2019**.
- These two channels are also expected to serve as two language variants of Sansad TV by airing similar programming in English and Hindi, when not telecasting live proceedings of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.
- While Lok Sabha TV was launched in 2006, Rajya Sabha TV was launched in 2011.

Revision Points

Portfolio	Union Minister	Constituency
Ministry of personnel, public grievances and pensions	Narendra Modi	Varanasi
Ministry of Defence	Rajnath Singh	Lucknow
Ministry of Home Affairs	Amit Shah	Gandhinagar
Ministry of Road Transport and Highways & Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium enterprises	Nitin Gadkari	Nagpur
Ministry of Chemical and Fertilizers	DV Sadananda Gowda	Bangalore North
Ministry of Finance & Ministry of	Nirmala Sitharaman	Rajya Sabha

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Corporate Affairs		
Ministry of Consumer affairs, food and public distribution	Piyush Goyal (Additional charge)	Rajya Sabha
Ministry of agriculture and farmers welfare, Ministry of Rural Development & Ministry of Panchayati Raj	Narendra Singh Tomar	Morena
Ministry of Law and Justice, Ministry of communications & Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology	Ravi Shankar Prasad	Patna Sahib
Ministry of Food Processing Industries	Narendra Singh Tomar (Additional charge)	Morena
Ministry of Social justice and empowerment	Thaawar Chand Gehlot	RS
Ministry of External Affairs	Dr Subrahmanyam Jaishankar	RS (Gujarat)
Ministry of Human Resource Development	Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'	Haridwar
Ministry of Tribal Affairs	Arjun Munda	Khunti
Ministry of Women and child Development & Ministry of Textiles	Smriti Zubin Irani	Amethi
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Science and Technology & Ministry of Earth Sciences	Dr Harsh Vardhan	Chandni Chowk
Ministry of environment, forest and climate change & Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprise	Prakash Javadekar	Rajya Sabha
Ministry of Railways & Ministry of Commerce and Industry	Piyush Goyal	Rajya Sabha
Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Ministry of Steel	Dharmendra Pradhan	Rajya Sabha
Ministry of Minority Affairs	Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi	Rajya Sabha
Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs,		Dharwad

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Ministry of coal & Ministry of Mines		
Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship	Dr Mahendra Nath Pandey	Chandauli
Ministry of Animal Husbandry, dairying and fisheries	Giriraj Singh	Begusarai

Important International News

Indian company Omega Seiki to set up electric vehicle plant in Bangladesh

- An Indian company **Omega Seiki** will set up an electric vehicle plant in Bangladesh.
- The manufacturing unit will be set up near Dhaka with an investment of **Rs. 100 crore**.
- It is the first project of any Indian company producing Electrical vehicles in the international market.
- The project will be a modern greenfield facility and will focus on manufacturing two-wheelers, three-wheelers, and electric bicycles.
- **The Chairman of the Omega Seiki mobility Uday Narang** said that Bangladesh does not have a policy on Electrical Vehicles as yet but it may change fast.
- According to a press release issued by the Omega Seiki, the company will focus on coming out with best in class vehicles and quality service experience for the buyers.

Russia launches first Arctic-monitoring satellite

- **Russia** has successfully launched its **first satellite to monitor the Arctic's climate and environment**.
- A **Soyuz-2.1b** carrier rocket with the "**Arktika-M**" satellite on board blasted off from the **Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan**
- The creation of a satellite system in highly elliptical orbits is necessary for information collection to solve operational meteorology and hydrology problems, and monitoring the climate and environment in the Arctic region
- The Arktika-M will provide round-the-clock continuous monitoring of the northern territory of Russia and the seas of the Arctic Ocean.
- The satellite will be able to transmit overview images of the Earth's northern polar region and the adjacent areas at least every 15-30 minutes.

Pakistan to remain on FATF 'greylist'

- **Global money** laundering watchdog the **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)** decided to keep Pakistan on its terrorism financing "**grey list**".
- FATF said Islamabad should demonstrate effective implementation of targeted financial sanctions against all **1267 and 1373 designated terrorists**.
- The FATF is an inter-governmental body set up in 1989 to combat money laundering, terror financing and other related threats to the international financial system.

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Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

- Currently, it has 39 members. Pakistan has been on the grey list since June 2018.

India, Brazil will continue to work together in advance our space collaboration

- External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar has congratulated Foreign Minister of Brazil Ernesto Araújo for successful launch of **Amazonia-1 on ISRO's PSLVC51 Mission**.
- Dr Jaishankar said, India and Brazil will continue to work to further advance our space collaboration.

Israel officially receives first ever UAE ambassador

- **Israel's president** formally received the **first-ever ambassador** from the **United Arab Emirates**, following last year's historic agreement between the countries.
- The **UAE** was the **first country** to agree to establish full diplomatic relations with the Jewish state under the Abraham Accords, a pact brokered by former US president Donald Trump.
- This will bring peace and prosperity to the people of the Middle East.

2023 Declared As International Year Of Millets As UN General Assembly

- The **UN General Assembly** adopted by consensus a resolution sponsored by India and supported by over **70 nations** declaring **2023 as the International Year of Millets**
- It aimed at raising awareness about the health benefits of the grain and their suitability for cultivation under changing climatic conditions
- The resolution titled 'International Year of Millets 2023' was initiated by India with Bangladesh, Kenya, Nepal, Nigeria, Russia and Senegal and was co-sponsored by over 70 nations.
- The **193-member** General Assembly unanimously adopted the resolution, declaring 2023 as the International Year of Millets.
- In April 2016, the UN General Assembly had proclaimed the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition from 2016 to 2025, recognising the need to eradicate hunger and prevent all forms of malnutrition worldwide.
- The Decade of Action on Nutrition provides an "umbrella for a wide group of actors to work together to address these and other pressing nutrition issues."

SpaceX successfully tests Starship SN10 rocket

- **SpaceX** successfully tested its Starship **SN10 prototype rocket** after two recent failed attempts.
- The rocket prototype was launched to an altitude of **10,000 kilometers** and then landed back on the ground. However, the rocket exploded about six minutes after landing.
- The test launch is deemed successful because the goal was to gather information on how the flaps work to control the rocket when it is horizontal as it is falling back to earth.
- The SN10 is an early prototype of the Starship Mars rocket of SpaceX which aims to get people and payloads to the moon, Mars and other distant destinations.
- This rocket is also a part of the company's strategy to phase out its other flight hardware including, the Falcon 9 and Falcon Heavy rockets and Dragon cargo and crew capsules, and let Starship shoulder the entire load.

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Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

Bangladesh govt. launched national app portal

- The Government of Bangladesh has launched its **national app portal bdapps.com**.
- The agreement between the **ICT division of the government of Bangladesh and the telecom company Robi was signed in Dhaka**.
- Through this agreement, BDApps will be established as the hub of the ICT division for application developers.
- Under the agreement, the ICT division will collaborate with bdapps to organise exclusive boot camps and software development events in the country.
- **Launching the app portal** as the national app portal, ICT minister Zunaid Ahmed Palak said that app developers from any organisation can use this platform to upload their apps.
- He said that the ICT division will seek exemption on income tax for the developers and the abolition of VAT on apps.
- The minister announced that training facilities of the ICT department will be extended to developers seeking to put their apps on the portal.
- BDApps is the largest mobile application platform in Bangladesh hosting **more than 23,000 apps developed by 12,000 developers**.

EAM Dr S Jaishankar speaks to his German counterpart

- External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar spoke to his **German counterpart Heiko Maas**.
- Dr Jaishankar said, they discussed **70 years of India-Germany diplomatic relations** and the COVID situation and regional issues.

Australia building world's first platypus sanctuary to promote breeding and rehabilitation

- **Australian conservationists** unveiled plans to build the **world's first refuge** for the platypus, to promote breeding and rehabilitation as the duck-billed mammal faces extinction due to climate change.
- The **Taronga Conservation Society** Australia and the New South Wales State government said they would build the specialist facility, mostly ponds and burrows for the semi aquatic creatures, at a zoo 391 km (243 miles) from Sydney, by 2022, which could house up to 65 platypuses.
- The new facility will promote breeding and rehabilitation of these iconic creatures, which are native to Australia.

UN report shows close to 931 million tonnes of food were wasted globally in 2019

- The **Food Waste Index Report 2021**, from the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** and partner organisation **WRAP**, said that around **931 million tonnes of food waste was generated in 2019**, sixty-one per cent of which came from households, 26 per cent from food service and 13 per cent from retail.
- This suggests that 17 per cent of total global food production may be wasted.
- In India, the household food waste estimate is 50 kg per capita per year, or 68,760,163 tonnes a year.
- **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)** target 12.3 aims at halving per-capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reducing food losses along production and supply chains. One of the two indicators for the target is the Food Waste Index.

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Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

Reliance Power forms JV with Jera for 745 MW Project in Bangladesh

- **Anil Ambani-led Reliance Power** has formed a joint venture with **Japan-headquartered Jera Co. Inc** to develop a new gas-fired power generation project in **Bangladesh**.
- The company has achieved financial closure for the project with a group of lenders including Japan Bank for International Cooperation and Asian Development Bank and all requisite conditions for availing drawdown under the loan agreements have been achieved.
- The project is to build, own, and operate a **745-MW** (net output: 718 MW) natural gas combined-cycle power project in Meghnaghat near Dhaka.
- Reliance Power's wholly-owned subsidiary Samalkot Power has received the approval from the Export Import Bank of the United States to sell one module of equipment to EPC contractor of the project Samsung C&T Corporation of South Korea for ₹1,540 crore.

Build new school building under Nepal-Bharat Maitri Development Partnership - India permits NRs 44.17M

- India has extended a grant of **44.17 million Nepali Rupees** to Nepal to build a new school building in Rupandehi district of the country under the **Nepal-Bharat Maitri Development Partnership**.
- In a statement Indian Embassy in Nepal said, an **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** was signed **between the two countries** for the construction project.
- Indian Embassy said that since 2003, under High Impact Community Development Projects programme, India has completed 446 projects in the areas of health, education, drinking water, connectivity, sanitation and creation of other public utilities across all seven provinces of Nepal.

Bangladesh observes historic Speech of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib

- **Bangladesh is observing the 50th anniversary** of the historic speech given by **Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman** in Dhaka on **7th March 1971**.
- Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid tributes to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib by placing wreaths at his portrait in front of the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi in Dhaka.
- Her younger sister Sheikh Rehana accompanied Prime Minister Hasina during the wreath-laying ceremony.
- Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had delivered the historic speech on this day in 1971 at the then **Race Course Maidan which is now known as Suhrawardy Udyan**.
- He had declared before a huge crowd on that day that 'Ebarer songram amader muktir songram, ebarer sangram swadhinatar sangram' meaning 'the struggle this time is for our freedom, the struggle this time is for our independence'.
- UNESCO recognised this speech as part of World Documentary Heritage in 2017.

Temporary legal residency to Venezuelans - United States offered

- The United States has announced to offer **temporary legal residency** to **several hundred thousand Venezuelans who fled their country due to economic collapse**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

- The **White House** announced that the US will also review US sanctions intended to isolate the South American nation.
- Both measures mark a shift from U.S. policy toward Venezuela under President Donald Trump.
- President Joe Biden's administration announced it would grant temporary protected status to Venezuelans already in the United States, allowing an estimated three lakhs 20 thousand people to legally live and work in the country for 18 months. Citizens of 10 countries, totaling about **400,000 people**, are in the United States now with temporary protected status.
- The largest number comes from El Salvador, Honduras and Haiti, many with U.S. citizen children and spouses

Indian Navy Ships to visit Bangladesh on 50th anniversary of 1971 Liberation war

- On part of the '**Swarnim Vijay Varsh**' celebration commemorating **50 years** of the **1971 war triumph against Pakistan**, Indian Naval Ships are scheduled to make the first-ever visit to the historic port town of Mongla in Bangladesh from March 8 to 10.
- Indian Naval Ships Sumedha, an indigenously build Offshore Patrol vessel and Kulish, an indigenously built guided missile corvette, are scheduled to make a port call at Mongla from March 8 to 10 to commemorate the ongoing Swarnim Vijay Varsh and reiterating the historic Indo-Bangladeshi friendship.
- This is the first time that any Indian Naval Ship is visiting the port of Mongla in Bangladesh and the visit is aimed at paying homage to the Bangladeshi and Indian combatants and citizens who laid down their lives during the Liberation War of 1971, and reiterate India's firm resolve and commitment to maintain peace, stability and good order in the region, in line with SAGAR - Security and Growth for all in the Region, as articulated by the Prime Minister of India

Two Indian Naval ships arrive in port city Mongla – Bangladesh

- Two ships of Indian navy arrived at the **port city of Mongla in Bangladesh** on a port call between March 8-10.
- The ships **INS Kulish and INS Sumedha with Cmde MV Raju, NM, Naval Officer-in-Charge Andhra Pradesh** onboard were given a ceremonial welcome by the Bangladesh navy on their arrival in Mongla.
- **INS Sumedha** is an indigenously built offshore patrol vessel and Kulish is an indigenously built guided missile corvette.
- They are visiting Bangladesh to commemorate the ongoing '**Swarnim Vijay Varsh**' and to reiterate the historic **India-Bangladesh friendship**.
- This is the first time that any Indian Naval Ship is visiting the port of Mongla to pay homage to the Bangladeshi and Indian combatants and citizens who laid down their lives during the **Liberation War of 1971**.
- It is also aimed to reiterate India's firm resolve and commitment to maintain peace, stability and good order in the region, in line with SAGAR - Security and Growth for all in the region, said the official press release.

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Russia break Twitter services over 'objectionable' content

- In Russia, the media regulator, Roskomnadzor, announced that it was slowing down online access to the social media giant **Twitter**, accusing the social media company of failing to remove around three thousands posts relating to objectionable content.
- The **communications watchdog** said, if Twitter does not comply with Russian law, there will be further actions against the service, including a complete ban.
- The Roskomnadzor said that this first measure to slow down Twitter's service in Russia would affect all mobile devices and half of non-mobile devices.
- The statement indicated that Roskomnadzor had made over 28,000 complaints to twitter since 2017, including repeated requests to remove illegal links and publications.

Armenian PM dismisses country's Chief of General Staff

- In Armenia, Prime Minister **Nikol Pashinyan** relieved the country's Chief of General Staff **Onik Gasparyan** of his duties.
- Prime Minister **Pashinyan** has been under pressure from the military to step down following a deadly conflict with Azerbaijan.
- The prime minister called the demand an attempted coup and began legal proceedings to force out the army's top general.
- Opposition protesters blocked the entrances to the parliament building in Yerevan, saying that they would not leave until Prime Minister **Pashinyan** stepped down.

Gulf of Oman: Indian Navy provides technical assistance to stranded merchant vessel

- Indian Navy Ship (INS) **Talwar**, deployed in the **Gulf of Oman**, provided technical assistance to a stranded merchant vessel carrying seven Indian crew members.
- According to an official statement, INS Talwar received a broadcast call from a **stranded merchant cargo ship MV Nayan**, requesting technical assistance.
- The cargo ship, on transit **from Oman to Iraq**, was drifting at sea since March 9, owing to the failure of its propulsion, power generation machinery and navigational equipment.
- An Indian Navy spokesperson mentioned, based on a preliminary aerial assessment about the distress of MV Nayan, the Indian Naval Ship dispatched its technical team by boat to offer assistance to the vessel that had seven Indians as crew.
- The naval teams worked onboard MV Nayan to operationalise its equipment, thereby making the vessel seaworthy again.

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Bangladesh: Five heads of state, govt to attend 10 day-long celebrations

- Five heads of state and heads of government from the **South Asian region** will participate in the ten-day-long celebrations being organised on the occasion of the centenary of **Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib and 50 years of liberation of Bangladesh**.
- The 10-day long special programme will start on 17th March and conclude on 26 March.
- **Chief Coordinator of the Committee** tasked with the planning of the celebrations in Bangladesh, **Dr. Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury** told the media in a press meet that the events will be held with a separate theme for each day.
- Strict health guidelines will be observed during the programme.
- Dr. Chowdhury mentioned that 500 invited guests from Bangladesh and abroad will be present during the functions to be held at the National parade ground on March 17,19,22, 24 and 26.
- All the programmes will be telecast on television.

First shipment of food product from Bangladesh to India through Inland Waterways begun

- **The first shipment of food products exported from Bangladesh to India** using the inland waterways left the **Pran Industrial Park from Palash in Narsingdi**.
- Minister of State for Shipping **Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury** flagged off the ship **M V Alif Lam Mim** which will cover a distance of about **710 kilometers to Kolkata in 8 days**.
- Shipping Minister **Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury** said that the government has taken several steps to export goods directly to India using the inland waterways on protocol routes.
- He said the government is increasing the fleet of dredgers to ensure navigability of rivers for easier transportation through inland waterway routes.
- Earlier these items were being sent through trucks which resulted in higher cost and wastage of the products on the way.

IPU President on a weeklong visit to India

- **Inter Parliamentary Union President Mr. Duarte Pacheco** called on **Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla** and witnessed the proceedings of the Upper House.
- Mr. Pacheco is on a weeklong visit to India on the invitation of Indian Parliament.
- He is scheduled to attend a felicitation ceremony and address the Parliament Members under the auspices of the **Indian Parliamentary Group (IPG)** in the Central Hall of Parliament House.
- **Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) formed in 1889**, is one of the oldest and largest international Parliamentary bodies consisting of **more than 179 Members**.
- IPU espouses the cause of promoting democracy across the world and takes up issues of international importance, such as, **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Climate Change, Gender Equality, etc.**

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- Since independence, India has always been an active Member of Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU). In the past, Shri G.S. Dhillon, the then Speaker of Lok Sabha and Dr. Smt. Najma Heptulla, the then Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha had served as the President of IPU.
- India has been contributing to the deliberations and outcomes of IPU by being on various Standing Committees, Forums and Advisory.

Uber offers UK drivers minimum wage, pension, holiday pay

- **Cab aggregator Uber** has said that it will give its **UK drivers** a guaranteed minimum wage, holiday pay and pensions, following a **recent court ruling** that said they should be classified as workers and entitled to such benefits.
- The announcement comes after it lost an appeal last month at the **UK Supreme Court** following a year-long court battle.
- Uber said it's extending the benefits immediately to its more than seventy thousand drivers in the UK.

Bangladesh: Ministry of Information renamed as Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

- **The government of Bangladesh** has decided to rename the **Ministry of Information** to the **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting**.
- **Information Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud** told media persons in Dhaka that the change in name is needed as the ministry is also doing broadcasting related work.
- He said that the gazette notification for the change in name has been issued after getting the approval from the President.
- Giving the historical background of the Ministry, Dr. Hasan Mahmud said that during the **Mujibnagar government** prior to the liberation of Bangladesh the ministry was named as the 'Ministry of Information and Betar' which was renamed to 'Ministry of Information and Broadcasting'.
- However in **1982**, the name was changed to 'Ministry of Information'. He said that the change in the name was not appropriate as it created confusion.

Kuwait Foreign Affairs Minister Ahmed Nasser Al-Mohammed Al-Sabah make two day visit to India

- Foreign Affairs Minister of Kuwait **Dr. Ahmed Nasser Al-Mohammed Al-Sabah** arrived in New Delhi for a two-day visit to India.
- He will meet External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar.

Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla and Italian Ambassador Vincenzo De Luca meet for ISA

- Foreign Secretary **Harsh Vardhan Shringla** met Italian Ambassador Vincenzo De Luca and welcomed Italy's accession to International Solar Alliance.
- They also discussed Italy's G20 Presidency and Vaccine Maitri.

About International Solar Alliance:

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- The International Solar Alliance is an alliance of 121 countries initiated by India, most of them being sunshine countries, which lie either completely or partly between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn.

Purpose of ISA:

- The goal of the ISA is to set the ground rules, norms and standards for solar energy, in order to obtain a rapid and massive deployment in countries that are rich in solar resources but where the risks are still seen as high.

Italy signs International Solar Alliance - ISA Framework Agreement

- **Italy signed the International Solar Alliance** under the amended **ISA Framework Agreement**.
- The amendments to the Framework Agreement of the ISA entered into force, opening its Membership to all Member States of the UN.
- The External Affairs Ministry said the Framework Agreement was signed by **Italy's Ambassador, Vincenzo De Luca**.
- The signed copies of the Agreement were received by **Additional Secretary (ER)**, as the representative of External Affairs Ministry, which is the depositary of ISA Framework Agreement.
- "The Italian Republic signed the framework agreement of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) after the amendments to the framework agreement of the ISA entered into force on **8 January 2021**, opening its membership to all member states of the UN," said by **Srivastava**.

India-Bangladesh made Water Resources Secretary level meeting in Delhi

- The **Secretary-level meeting between Water Resources ministries** of India and Bangladesh under the framework of the **Joint Rivers Commission** was held in Delhi on.
- According to a press release issued by the High Commission of India, both sides noted that India and Bangladesh share **54 common rivers** which directly impact the livelihood of people of two countries.
- Both sides commended the close cooperation that exists between India and Bangladesh in the matter.
- **India and Bangladesh** agreed to expand cooperation across an entire gamut of water resources issues including framework for sharing of river waters, mitigation of pollution, river bank protection, flood management and basin management among others.
- **A Joint Technical Working Group** will provide inputs on the matter, said the press release.
- The Indian delegation was led by Water Resources Secretary Pankaj Kumar while the Bangladesh delegation was led by Kabir Bin Anwar, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources.
- Both sides agreed to schedule the next meeting at Secretary level under JRC framework at Dhaka at mutually convenient dates.

US Defence Secretary Lloyd J Austin visit to India

- **US Defence Secretary Lloyd J Austin** will arrive in India.
- During the visit, he will meet **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh**, and other senior dignitaries of the government to discuss deepening the India US Major Defense Partnership.
- They will also discuss advancing cooperation for a free, prosperous and open Indo-Pacific Region.

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- Discussions regarding **defence cooperation** would also focus on how both countries could consolidate military to military cooperation and defence trade and industry cooperation.
- Mr Austin's visit to India as part of his first overseas travel emphasizes the strength of the India-US strategic partnership.

Bangladesh PM inaugurate Amar Ekushey book fair

- **Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina** inaugurated the **Amar Ekushey book fair in Dhaka**.
- Participating in the inaugural event through video conferencing Prime Minister Hasina urged upon all to develop the habit of book reading.
- **Prime Minister Hasina** also released the book 'New China 1952' which is the **English translation of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib's book 'Amar Dekha Naya Chin'**.
- She also distributed prizes among the winners of the Bangla Academy Literary Award 2020.
- The theme of this year's book fair is the birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and golden jubilee of independence.
- The book fair has been dedicated to the martyrs of the liberation war of 1971.
- The book fair is spread over more than 15 lakh square ft area on the premises of **Bangla Academy and Shaheed Suhrawardy Udyan**.

PM Modi to gift 'Made in India' vaccines to Jamaica

- **Legendary Jamaican and West Indies Cricketer Chris Gayle** has thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi, people and government of India for the gift of Made In India vaccines to Jamaica.
- He said India's Vaccine Maitri is very much appreciated.
- The Jamaican batsman is the second player from his team after Andre Russell to thank India for sending **50,000 doses of coronavirus vaccines to the Caribbean nation**.

India take part in Nowruz celebrations at SCO

- India participated in the **Nowruz festivities** at the **SCO Secretariat in Beijing**.
- As SCO is celebrating 2021 as '**Year of Culture**', India showcased performances of Kathak, Yoga, Indian cuisine, artefacts to an audience of **more than 500**.
- Eighteen countries including all the member countries, dialogue partners and observer countries presented their cultural diversities including their cuisine.
- **Ambassador Vikram Misri** extended warmest greetings on the occasion and conveyed that Nowruz is an important part of India's own cultural tapestry and a reflection of diversity, richness and plurality of Indian culture.
- Ambassador also planted a Pine tree sapling on the occasion and said that it symbolizes the nurturing of friendship between India and SCO and the message '**Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**'.
- A friendship pavilion was also inaugurated at the SCO Secretariat as the atmosphere was full of festivities amid the tunes of local musical instruments.

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- Indian pavilion set up by India Tourism Office, Beijing was the centre of attraction for many as it showcased its cultural diversity, cuisine and heritage.
- A demonstration of Yoga was also held.

Indian Embassy in Beijing starts India@75 celebrations

- **Indian Embassy in Beijing started India@75 celebrations** with belated **Vishwa Hindi Diwas celebrations** which were attended by the Chinese students studying Hindi in different Chinese universities, their Hindi teachers and members of the Indian community in Beijing.
- **Ambassador Vikram Misri** read the Prime Minister's message on **Vishwa Hindi Diwas**.
- He said that Hindi is one of the top spoken languages in the world and Vishwa Hindi Diwas is an occasion to promote Hindi and celebrate its popularity at global level.
- A video celebrating India's achievements since Independence was played on the occasion to celebrate the 75 years of India's Independence - "**Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav**".
- The celebrations of 75 years of India's independence - Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav could not have got a better start when Chinese academicians and students joined embassy officials and Indian community to celebrate Vishwa Hindi Diwas.
- Chinese teachers and students termed Hindi as an important medium to understand India's culture and emphasised on its role in building bridges between India and China.

Afghan Foreign Minister arrived India for talks

- The **Minister of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, Mohammed Haneef Atmar** arrived in New Delhi for a **three-day visit** to discuss, among other things, the ongoing peace process in the war-torn country.
- "The **purpose of Mr. Atmar** and his accompanying delegation's visit to India is to discuss bilateral relations, strengthen regional and international consensus on the Afghan peace process, and enhance cooperation," declared a press release from the **Afghan Foreign Ministry**.
- Upon his arrival, Mr. Atmar held bilateral talks with **External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar**.

India appreciate initiative announced by Saudi Arabia - fostering peace in Yemen

- India has welcomed the initiative announced by **Saudi Arabia for fostering peace in Yemen**.
- In response to a question on the announcement of peace initiative by Saudi Arabia for Yemen, **External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi** said that India has noted that the initiative inter alia proposes a comprehensive **ceasefire across Yemen** under the supervision of the United Nations as well as consultations between the Yemeni parties to reach a political resolution under the auspices of the UN.
- He said, India supports all efforts to find a political solution to the **Yemeni crisis**.
- India has hoped that all parties in Yemen would be able to come together to the negotiating table soon to end the conflict.

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US Senate confirms Indian-American Dr Vivek Murthy as Prez Biden's Surgeon General

- **The US Senate** has voted to confirm **Indian-American Dr Vivek Murthy** to be **President Biden's Surgeon General**, handing the administration one of its top public health officials amid the coronavirus pandemic.
- The Senators voted 57-43 to confirm the Indian American as Biden's surgeon general.
- Dr Murthy mentioned he is deeply grateful to be confirmed by the Senate to serve once again as the Surgeon General.
- 1977 born Dr Murthy served as the Surgeon General under the Obama administration from 2014 to 2017.
- He is a distinguished **Physician and former Vice Admiral in the Public Health Service Commissioned Corps**.

PM Modi's visit to Bangladesh: report by Foreign Secretary Shringla

- The visit of **Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Bangladesh** starting on 26 March will be of very special significance in **reinforcing the comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries**.
- Briefing media ahead of the official state visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Bangladesh **Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla** said that Prime Minister's first visit to a foreign country after the Covid 19 pandemic signifies the importance India attaches to its ties with Bangladesh.
- During his visit to Bangladesh Prime Minister Modi will join the **national day celebration** of Bangladesh on 26th March and deliver an address at the National Parade ground in Dhaka.
- He will also hold delegation level talks and restricted talks with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh.
- Prime Minister Modi will pay homage at the **National Martyr's memorial** at Savar just outside Dhaka.
- He will also jointly inaugurate the **Bangabandhu- Bapu exhibition** with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh.

WWII codebreaker Alan Turing honoured on new UK bank note

- **The Bank of England** unveiled the design of the **new GBP 50 banknote**, which features British scientist and **World War II codebreaker Alan Turing**.
- The polymer note, which includes an image of Turing and other related imagery, will be issued for the first time on June 23, coinciding with what would have been the **mathematician's 109th birthday**.
- "There's something of the character of a nation in its money, and we are right to consider and celebrate the people on our banknotes.
- So I'm delighted that our **new GBP 50 features one of Britain's most important scientists, Alan Turing**," said Bank of England Governor Andrew Bailey.

India-US economic cooperation through mutual dialogue and discussion

- **India and US** have agreed to further **India-US economic cooperation** on the basis of shared objectives and resolve pending legacy issues through mutual dialogue and discussion.
- **Indian Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal** had a very productive discussion with the **United States Trade Representative (USTR)**, Ambassador Katherine Tai, over a video call.
- Mr Goyal congratulated **Katherine Tai** on her appointment as USTR.

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- Mr Goyal said that both sides discussed a range of issues and agreed to strengthen the India-US trade and investment relationship.
- They also agreed to strengthen the **India- US Trade Policy Forum (TPF)** and to convene the next Ministerial-level meeting of the forum in 2021.

New Zealand become second country after India to pass Miscarriages Bereavement Leave Law

- The **New Zealand Parliament** has recently passed legislation to **provide leave for miscarriage and for stillbirth**
- The **Bill allows mothers and their partners the right to paid leave** following a miscarriage or still birth, without having to tap into sick leave.
- **Employees will get three days leave** when a pregnancy **ends with a stillbirth**.
- With this, New Zealand has become only the second country in the world to do so.
- India is the only other country in the world with similar legislation that provides leave for miscarriage and stillbirth.

India , US agree to revamp India-US (SEP)

- **Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and US Secretary of Energy, Jennifer Granholm** have agreed to revamp **India-US Strategic Energy Partnership (SEP)**.
- Mr. Pradhan held an introductory meeting virtually with him and reviewed the SEP.
- The two leaders agreed to revamp the India-US SEP to reflect the new priorities of **Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Joe Biden** with focus on promoting clean energy with low-carbon pathways and accelerating green energy cooperation.
- During the meeting, they also agreed to prioritize greater collaboration in cleaner energy sector and joint **R&D through Partnership to Advance Clean Energy Research** among other initiatives.
- Besides, both sides agreed to convene the third meeting of a revamped India-US SEP at an early date.
- They decided to intensify the efforts to take advantage of the complementarities of both the countries -advanced US technologies and rapidly growing India's energy market, for a **win-win situation** through a cleaner energy route with low carbon pathways.

India appreciate initiative announced by Saudi Arabia - fostering peace in Yemen

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- In response to a question on the announcement of peace initiative by Saudi Arabia for Yemen, **External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi** said that India has noted that the initiative inter alia proposes a comprehensive **ceasefire across Yemen** under the supervision of the United Nations as well as consultations between the Yemeni parties to reach a political resolution under the auspices of the UN.
- He said, India supports all efforts to find a political solution to the **Yemeni crisis**.
- India has hoped that all parties in Yemen would be able to come together to the negotiating table soon to end the conflict.

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Revision Points

Country	Capital	Currency	Head
Bangladesh	Dhaka	Taka	Abdul Hamid
Denmark	Copenhagen	Krone	Mette Frederiksen
France	Paris	Euro	Emmanuel Macron
Germany	Berlin	Euro	Frank-Walter Steinmeier
Maldives	Malé	Rufiyaa	Ibrahim Mohamed Solih
UK	London	Pound Sterling	Boris Johnson
UAE	Abu Dhabi	Dirham	Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan
USA	Washington D.C	Dollar	Joe Biden (Elected)
Nepal	Kathmandu	Rupee	K. P. Sharma Oli
China	Beijing	Renminbi	Xi Jinping
Russia	Moscow	Ruble	Mikhail Mishustin
Italy	Rome	Euro	Giuseppe Conte
Japan	Tokyo	Yen	Yoshihide Suga
Israel	Jerusalem	Shekel	Reuven Rivlin
New Zealand	Wellington	Dollar	Jacinda Ardern
Afghanistan	Kabul	Afghani	Ashraf Ghani
Australia	Canberra	Dollar	Scott Morrison
Uzbekistan	Tashkent	So'm	Abdulla Nigmatovich Aripov
North Korea	Pyongyang	Won	Kim Jong-un
Madagascar	Antananarivo	Ariary	Andry Nirina Rajoelina
Mauritius	Port Louis	Rupee	Pravind Jugnauth
Iraq	Baghdad	Dinar	Barham Salih
Philippines	Manila	Peso	Rodrigo Duterte
Venezuela	Caracas	Bolívar	Nicolás Maduro
Pakistan	Islamabad	Rupee	Imran Khan
Singapore	Singapore City	Dollar	Halimah Yacob
Ireland	Dublin	Euro	Michael D. Higgins
Switzerland	Bern	Franc	Guy Parmelin
Armenia	Yerevan	Dram	Nikol Pashinyan
Oman	Muscat	Rial	Sultan Haitham bin Tariq

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Brazil	Brasilia	Real	Jair Bolsonaro
South Africa	Cape Town	Rand	Cyril Ramaphosa
Finland	Helsinki	Euro	Sauli Niinistö
Kuwait	Kuwait City	Dinar	Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah
Jamaica	Kingston	Dollar	Andrew Holness
Saudi Arabia	Riyadh	Riyal	Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud
Yemen	Sana'a	Rial	Maeen Abdulmalik Saeed
Republic of the Congo	Brazzaville	CFA franc	Jean-Michel Sama Lukonde
The Netherlands	Amsterdam	Euro	Mark Rutte
Tanzania	Dodoma	Shilling	Kassim Majaliwa
Fiji	Suva	Dollar	Frank Bainimarama
Sweden	Stockholm	Krona	Stefan Löfven
Sri Lanka	Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte	Rupee	Mahinda Rajapaksa
Tajikistan	Dushanbe	Somoni	Kokhir Rasulzoda
Egypt	Cairo	Pound	Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi
Papua New Guinea	Port Moresby	Kina	James Marape
Ivory Coast	Yamoussoukro	CFA franc	Alassane Ouattara

Important Appointments

National Appointments

Name of the Person	Designation	Predecessor/Others
Sharad Goklani	President & CTO, AU Small Finance Bank	
Matam Venkata Rao	MD & CEO, Central Bank of India	He is the Executive Director of Canara Bank
Tarun Bajaj	Additional charge of Department of Revenue	Dr Ajay Bhushan Pandey
Vice Admiral R Hari Kumar	Flag Officer Commanding-In-Chief of	C. Ajit Kumar

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	Western Naval Command.	
Anindya Basu (Based in Gurugram)	National Managing Partner, KPMG in India	He was the Senior Managing Director & Country Head for Accenture
Saurabh Mittal	Chief Technology Officer, Retail Finance Business - Piramal	
Susheel Umesh	Chief Commercial Officer – Emerging Markets, Biocon Biologics Ltd	
Jaideep Bhatnagar	Principal Director General, Press Information Bureau	Kuldeep Singh Dhatwalia
Kuldeep Singh	Additional charge of Central Reserve Police Force director general	
Mallikarjun Kharge	New Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha	
Imran Amin Siddiqui	Executive Director (ED), Indian Bank	Shenoy Vishwanath V and K.Ramachandran are the other two ED on the board of Indian Bank
Sanjay Goel	Executive Vice President and President, Asia-Pacific	Amit Sharma
Hardeep Singh Brar	National Head of Sales and Marketing, Kia Motors India	
Chirag Gandhi	MD Senior Advisor, Team Head, Julius Baer India	
Ben Baldanza	Vice Chairman, GoAir Board	
Suzlon Energy	Forensic Audit, SEBI	
Justice N V Ramanna	Recommended Next Chief Justice of India	Recommended by S A Bodbe
Uri Levine	Board Chairman, Zoomcar	
Dr. D S Ravindran	Additional Director (Non-Executive, Independent), Karnataka Bank	
Randhir Thakur	Head, New standalone business unit, Intel Foundry Services	

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Shankar Arumugavelu	Corporation's Board of Directors and Audit and Finance Committee of the Board	
Chitra Nayak	Independent Director, Infosys	It is based on recommendation of the Nomination and Remuneration Committee of the Infosys Board
Ralf Speth	Chairman, TVS Motor	Former CEO, Jaguar Land Rover
Hardip Singh Goindi	Chief Operating Officer, Three Wheels United	He has previously worked at Piaggio Vehicles as Executive Vice President. Hardip was President-Marketing at TVS Motor Company
Saurbah Garg	Chief Executive Officer , Unique Identification Authority of India	
Sanjeev Kumar	Chairman, Airports Authority of India	
Atish Chandra	Chairman and Managing Director, Food Corporation of India (FCI).	
Navneet Kapoor	Executive Board, .P. Moller – Maersk	He is the Chief Technology & Information Officer of A.P. Moller - Maersk
T T Srinivasaraghavan	Chairman Emeritus, Finance Industry Development Council	
Sanjay Chamria & Umesh Revankar	Co-Chairmen, Finance Industry Development Council	
Rohit Sharma	Brand Ambassador, Glenmark Pharma	



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International Appointments

Name of the Person	Designation	Predecessor /Others
Ligia Noronha	Head of the New York Office of the United Nations Environment Programme	Appointed by António Guterres
Manpreet Vohra	Next High Commissioner to Australia	He is Ambassador of India to Mexico Appointed by Ministry of External Affairs
Tom Moody	New Director of Cricket, Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC)	
Mary Kom	Chairperson, International Boxing Association's champions and veterans committee	
Manpreet Vohra	Next High Commissioner to Australia	Appointed by Ministry of External Affairs
Naureen Hassan	First vice president and chief operating officer of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.	
Tashnuva Anan	First transgender newsprsender	Appointed by Bangladesh's Boishakhi TV
Dr Harsh Vardhan	Chairman, Stop TB Partnership Board	Established in the year 2000
Samia Suluhu Hassan	President, Tanzania	John Magufuli
Mark Rutte	Prime Minister, The Netherlands	It is his 4 th term
Denis Sassou Nguesso	President, Republic of the Congo	

Resignation/Retirement

Name of the Person	Designation
Ramesh Jarkiholi	Major and Medium Water Resources Minister, Karnataka
Jeh Wadia	Managing Director, GoAir

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President appoints 2 ministers as angers ruling partner

- **Afghan President Ashraf** Ghani has made **two key Cabinet changes**, a move condemned as “unacceptable” by his powerful governing partner, **Abdullah Abdullah**, at a time when the US is ratcheting up the pressure to reach a peace agreement with the Taliban.
- Under the deal, Ghani remained president of the war-torn nation while Abdullah was named head of the country's National Reconciliation Council, which has the authority to handle and approve all affairs related to **Afghanistan's peace process**.
- Abdullah would also be able to appoint half of Ghani's Cabinet and issue executive orders.
- Ghani **dismissed** Interior Minister **Masoud Andarabi**, appointing **Hayatullah Hayat** as caretaker minister.

Important Awards and Honours

Winner	Prize	Awarded By/Theme/Purpose
Chadwick Boseman	Golden Globe for Best Actor in a Motion Picture, Drama	He won the Golden Globe posthumously for his performance as Levee in Ma Rainey's Black Bottom
Narendra Modi	CERAWeek global energy and environment leadership award	Theme: The New Map: Energy, Climate, and Charting the Future
Sreekumaran Thampi	M K Arjunan Master award	
Mohankrishna Bohara	30th Bihari Puraskar for 2020	For his Hindi book of Criticism, titled Taslima: Sangharsh aur Sahitya.
Zack Snyder (American filmmaker)	Valiant Award	Awarded by the Hollywood Critics Association at the virtual fourth Annual HCA Film Awards ceremony
Hyundai i20	2021 Indian car of the year award	
Tata Nexon EV	Green Car award.	
Koneru Humpy	BBC India Sportswoman of the Year award for 2020	
Nomadland	Best Picture	At the 26th Annual Critics ' Choice Awards (Hosted by Taye

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		Diggs)
Chloe Zhao	Best Director and Best Adapted Screenplay	At the 26th Annual Critics ' Choice Awards
Hazi Ali Producer Group	Best SHG award	Stitching masks
Anju Bobby George	Lifetime Achievement Award 2021	Awarded by BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year award 2021
Manu Bhaker	Emerging Player-of-the-Year award 2021	Awarded by BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year award 2021
Nikhileswar	Kendra Sahitya Akademi Award-2020	He is one among the six 'Digambara Kavulu'. He contributed to English and Hindi languages.
Mani Shankar Mukhopadhyay (Shankar)	Kendra Sahitya Akademi Award for Best Children's book	Recognition of his work towards promoting Konkani language
ReNew Power	Global Lighthouse Network	Awarded by the World Economic Forum
Rajan Eye Care Hospital	Most Trusted Eyecare Hospital of the Year	Awarded by Topgallant Media
Prof Dr Mohan Rajan	Healthcare Personality of the Year Ophthalmology	Awarded by Topgallant Media
Esaf Small Finance Bank	'Great Place to Work' Award	
Kerala Agricultural University	Chancellor's Award 2020 (The Chancellor's Award carries a cash prize of Rs.5 crore)	Mahatma Gandhi University (MGU) has bagged the fourth Chancellor's Award for 2017-18.
Kerala Veterinary and Animal Sciences University	Chancellor's Award for the Best Emerging Young University	The Best Emerging Young University will receive a prize of Rs.1 crore.
Harsh C. Mariwala	EY Entrepreneur of the Year 2020	
DGP Gautam Sawang	SKOCH Award in the	

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	category of Best DGP in India	
DGP Gautam Sawang & Team	FICCI Best State Award for Smart Innovative Policing	For connecting with Interoperable Criminal Justice System of National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)
Chloe Zhao's "Nomadland"	Top prize at 2021 Producers Guild Awards	
Bangbandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rehman	Gandhi Peace Prize 2020	
Asha Bhosle	Nominated for Maharashtra Bhushan Award	
Rain Garden developed by the HMDA	Awards given in Under the Green and Clean City category (Awarded at the 2021 International Exhibition and 6th Smart Cities India Expo)	The awards were given by the India Trade Promotion Organisation (The Begumpet flyover at the intersection of Kukatpally and Yousufguda nalas)
New Municipal Solid Waste Management project	Award in the Smart Waste Disposal Project category (Awarded at the 2021 International Exhibition and 6th Smart Cities India Expo)	The project comprises a city-wide network of fully mechanised Secondary Collection and Transport Points (SCTPs).
We Hub	Award in the Startup category	Awarded at the 2021 International Exhibition and 6th Smart Cities India Expo
Mahinder Giri	International Ranger Award (Only Ranger from Asia)	Range officer of Rajaji Tiger Reserve
Mo Bus service	Cities India Awards-2021 (Organized by the India Trade Promotion)	Managed by Capital Region Urban Transport
Carmen Maria Machado	Rathbones Folio Literary prize	It is for her memoir In the DreamHouse, which examines the domestic abuse she was

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		subjected to by her ex-girlfriend.
Carmen Maria Machado (American author)	2021 Rathbones Folio Literary prize	For her memoir, In the DreamHouse, released in 2019

LJP's 'Jallikattu' selected for Golden Reel awards nomination

- Lijo Jose Pellissery's **Jallikattu** has been nominated for the prestigious **Motion Picture Sound Editors (MPSE) Golden Reel Awards**, which honour various categories in the entertainment sector.
- The film has been nominated for outstanding achievement in **Sound Editing (Foreign Language)** in the **68th edition of the awards**.
- Sound editor/designer Renganaath Ravee and his team comprising Sreejith Sreenivasan, Kannan Ganpat, Boney M Joy, Arun Rama Varma, Amandeep Singh, Francis C David, and Mohammad Iqbal Paratwada worked on the film's sound.

ROPE achievement awards conferred

- The **Rotary Police Engagement (ROPE) Lifetime Achievement awards** were presented to senior police officers in the state who have taken the initiative to modernise and popularise **Kerala Police**.
- **Governor Arif Mohammed Khan** presented the awards to State Police Chief Loknath Behera, ADGP and Cyberdome nodal officer Manoj Abraham, ADGP B Sandhya, ADGP (Crime Branch) S K Sreejith, Coastal Security IG P Vijayan, Anti-Terrorist Squad DIG Anoop Kuruvila John, and DIG P Prakash, at a function held at Raj Bhavan.
- **ROPE is a joint venture between the three Rotary districts of Kerala from Kasaragod to Parassala.**
- ROPE Kerala chief coordinator and former district governor Suresh Mathew presided over the function.
- Kerala secretary and general coordinator Jigeesh Narayanan welcomed the gathering.

Golden Globes 2021: Complete list of winners

- The **Golden Globes 2021 ceremony** was held **March 1**.
- **Purpose** : To recognise excellence in film, both American and international, and American television.
- This was the **78th edition** of the annual event, which honored the best in American television, as well as film in 2020 and early 2021, as chosen by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association.
- American TV series "**The Crown**" won the most awards for the ceremony with four awards.

Winners in Film category

- Best Film – Drama: Nomadland
- Best Film – Musical/Comedy: Borat Subsequent Movie Film
- Best Director: Chloe Zhao for Nomadland
- Best Actress – Drama: Andra Day for The United States vs. Billie Holiday
- Best Actor – Drama: Chadwick Boseman for Ma Rainey's Black Bottom
- Best Actress – Musical/Comedy: Rosamund Pike for I Care A Lot

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- Best Actor – Musical/Comedy: Sacha Baron Cohen for Borat Subsequent Movie Film
- Best Supporting Actress: Jodie Foster for The Mauritanian
- Best Supporting Actor: Daniel Kaluuya for Judas And The Black Messiah
- Best Screenplay: Aaron Sorkin for The Trial of the Chicago 7
- Best Foreign Language Film: Minari
- Best Animated Feature: Soul
- Best Original Score: Soul
- Best Original Song: 'Io Si (Seen)' from The Life Ahead

Winners in Television category

- Best TV Series – Drama: The Crown
- Best TV Series – Musical/Comedy: Schitt's Creek
- Best Limited Series, Anthology or TV Film: The Queen's Gambit
- Best Actress – Drama: Emma Corrin for The Crown
- Best Actor – Drama: Josh O'Connor for The Crown
- Best Actress – Musical/Comedy: Catherine O'Hara for Schitt's Creek
- Best Actor – Musical/Comedy: Jason Sudeikis for Ted Lasso
- Best Supporting Actress: Gillian Anderson for The Crown
- Best Supporting Actor: John Boyega for Small Axe
- Best Actress (Limited Series, Anthology or TV Film): Anya Taylor-Joy for The Queen's Gambit
- Best Actor (Limited Series, Anthology or TV Film): Mark Ruffalo for I Know This Much Is True

Terumo Penpol employee selected for Lifetime Award – Women's day observance

- As part of **Women's Day observance celebrations**, JCI Trivandrum Green City is honouring some of the **eminent personalities in the social cause and education field from the city.**
- **Baby P S, senior manager in-charge (PR and CSR), Terumo Penpol Private Limited** has been selected for the **Lifetime Excellence Award** for her outstanding contribution in the category of Social cause.
- She will receive the award in a function to be held at Hotel Terrace, SS Kovil Road, Thampanoor.
- **Other eminent personalities such as K Omanakutty Amma**, Carnatic vocalist and academician;
- **Kalamandalam Vimala Menon**, mohiniyattam exponent;
- **Vinduja Menon**, film artist;
- **Shailaja Beegum**, chairperson of Hussain Charitable Trust;
- **Dr Amitha Praveen**, assistant professor, blood bank, Sree Chitra hospital;
- **Jameela Begum A**, former senate member, Kerala University;
- **Jolly Jacob**, principal, Christ Nagar College, **Radika Nair**, singer and **Arifa Nasifat Beevi**, president of Muslim Welfare association will also receive the awards.

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- Apart from this, **Baby P S** has also been nominated to receive the award Project C.U.R.E.

Bangladesh to confer its highest civilian award 'Swadhinta Puraskar'

- **Bangladesh** has announced the names of **9 individuals and one organization** for conferring the Independence Award, the highest civilian award of Bangladesh for the year 2021.
- The Cabinet department of the government issued a press release.
- **Four individuals** have been selected **posthumously** for the award under the category of freedom fighters for their contribution to the liberation war of Bangladesh.
- These include **A K M Bazlur Rahman, Ahsan Ullah Master, Brig Gen. Khurshid Uddin Ahmed and Akhataruzzaman Chowdhury Babu**. **Dr. Mrinmoy Guha Niyogi** has been selected for his contribution to **science and technology**.
- **Mahadev Saha** will be honoured with the award for **literature** while **Ataur Rahman and Gazi Mazharul Anwar** will get the award for their contribution in the **field of Culture**.
- **Dr. M Amzad Hossain** has been nominated for the award for **social and public service**.
- In the category of organisations, the **Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council** has been nominated for **research and training**.
- The award has been given since 1977 ahead of the Independence Day of Bangladesh.
- The recipients of the award get a gold medal and a cash reward of Taka 5 lakh.

WAN-IFRA names The Hindu Group 'Champion Publisher of the Year 2020'

- The **Hindu Group** won **two golds and two silvers** at WAN IFRA's South Asian Digital Media Awards, culminating in being named '**Champion Publisher of the Year**', owing to the highest tally on the points table.
- The awards are presented in recognition of outstanding work done by news publishers, in digital media.
- The winners were honoured virtually at the Digital Media India 2021 Conference.

19 women achievers bags Aarya awards

- As many as **19 women achievers** from different fields were felicitated at the **9th edition of Aarya Awards** to mark the **International Women's Day**.
- **Organised by** city-based philanthropic organisation Parichay Foundation, the event was inaugurated by Speaker Surjya Narayan Patro in presence of Kathak exponent Shovana Narayan, Kandhamal MP Achyuta Samanta, former MP Prasanna Patasani and OSHB chairperson Priyadarshi Mishra.

20 Persons to be conferred Sahitya Akademi awards

- **Politician-writer M Veerappa Moily, poets Arundhati Subramaniam and Anamika** are among the twenty writers who will be conferred with the **Sahitya Akademi Award 2020**.
- This annual Sahitya Akademi Award has been announced for **India's 20 regional languages including Hindi, Maithili, Urdu and others**.
- According to an official communication of the Akademi, the seven books of poetry, four books of novels, **five books of short stories**, two plays one each of Memoirs and Epic poetry have won the awards.

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- The official statement mentioned that awards in Malayalam, Nepali, Odia and Rajasthani will be announced at a later date by the Akademi.
- Kamal Kant Jha of Darbhanga bagged the award for his short story titled '**Gachha Roosal Achhi**' on the importance of plantation in Maithili, while Anamika from Muzaffarpur won in poetry in Hindi titled '**Tokri Mein Digant Their Gatha**'.
- Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar congratulated Jha and Anamika for their outstanding literary creations that have brought laurel to the state.
- Jha, addressing the media mentioned, "It is an honour for all who work with literary creation with patience.
- Creativity never goes unacknowledged".
- Other winners are Harish Meenakshi (Gujarati), Anamika (Hindi), RS Bhaskar (Konkani), Irungbam Deven (Manipuri), Rupchand Hansda (Santali), and Nikhileswar (Telugu).
- Nanda Khare (Marathi), Maheshchandra Sharma Gautam (Sanskrit), Imaiya (Tamil) and Sri Hussain-ul-Haque were named as winners for their novels. Apurba Kumar Saikia (Assamese), (late) Dharanidhar Owari (Bodo), (late) Hiday Koul Bharti (Kashmiri) and Gurdev Singh Rupana (Punjab) have received the award for short stories.
- The Akademi has named Gian Singh (Dogri) and Jetho Lalwani (Sindhi) the winners for their plays, while Shankar (Mani Shankar Mukhopadhyay) in (Bengali) received the award for a memoir.

Chief Minister's Award: Dangamal at Bhitarkanika national parks bags first prize

- Three nature camps were felicitated by the **State government with Chief Minister's Award for best performance in forest protection through nature tourism on the occasion of World Forestry Day.**
- The nature camps are Dangamal at **Bhitarkanika National Park(ODISHA)**, Mandasaru in Kandhamal and Daringbadi.
- Dangamal, famous for its boating in mangrove creeks, birding and night stay, drew **3,300 visitors** till February generating revenue of **Rs 73 lakh.**
- **Mandasaru and Daringbadi** also drew a combined footfall of around 2,900.
- The awards were given to the Eco-Development Committees and Van Suraksha Samitis concerned.
- The first prize carried **Rs one lakh**, while the second and third carried cash awards of **Rs 75,000 and Rs 50,000** respectively.
- Satkosia Sands Resort at Badmul, Kumari Nature Camp in Similipal and Debrigarh were also presented the award for the year 2019-20.

67th National Film Awards Announced

- The winner of **67th National Film Awards** was announced on **22 March 2021** in **New Delhi** to honour the best of **Indian cinema in 2019.**
- Most Film Friendly State Award – Sikkim
- Award for Best Book on Cinema – A Gandhian Affair: India's Curious Portrayal of Love in Cinema, by Sanjay Suri
- Best Feature Film: Marakkar: Lion of the Arabian Sea (Malayalam)
- Best Actor (shared): Manoj Bajpayee for Bhonsle (Hindi), and Dhanush for Asuran (Tamil)

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- Best Actress: Kangana Ranaut for Panga (Hindi) and Manikarnika: The Queen of Jhansi (Hindi)
- Best Director: Sanjay Puran Singh Chauhan for Bahattar Hoorain (Hindi)
- Best Non-Feature Film: An Engineered Dream (Hindi)
- Best Hindi Film: Chhichhore
- Kangana Ranaut will get a Best Actress award for her movie Manikarnika -The Queen of Jhansi and Panga.
- Vijaya Sethupati will be awarded the best supporting actor award for Tamil film Super Deluxe and Pallavi Joshi will get the best supporting actress award for Hindi film The Tashkent Files.
- B Praak will get the Best Male playback Singer award for song Teri Mitti in Hindi Film Kesari.
- Savani Ravindra will be awarded Best Female playback Singer award for song Rann Petala in Marathi Movie Bardo.
- D Imman will get the Best Music Direction Award for his songs in Tamil Film Viswasam.
- Prabuddha Banerjee will get the award for background music in Bengali movie Jeyesthaputro.
- Prabha Varma will get the Best Lyrics award for Malayalam movie Kolaambi.
- Raju Sundaram bagged the Best Choreography award for Telugu Movie Maharshi.
- The award for the most film friendly state goes to Sikkim.
- Best Non Feature Film will be awarded to Hemant Gaba's An Engineered Dream.
- The award for the best film critic goes to 'Sohini Chattopadhyay.
- In the Non Feature Film category, Best Animation Film to be awarded to Radha.
- Best Art and Culture film award will be given to Shrikhetra ru Sahijata (Odia).
- The Award for the best Narration for Non-Feature Films goes to Wild Karnataka (English) by Sir David Attenborough.
- The award for the Best Music Direction in Non-Feature Films goes to Kranti Darshi Guruji- Ahead Of Times (Hindi) by Bishakhjyoti.
- The best book on cinema goes to A Gandhian Affair: India's Curious Portrayal of Love in Cinema written by Sanjay Suri.
- Ronuwa - Who Never Surrender has been selected as the best Assamese Film.
- Srijit Mukherjee's Gumnaami will be awarded as Best Bengali Film.
- Chhichore has been selected as best Hindi film.
- Best Kannada film is Akshi directed by Manoj Kumar and Best Konkani film is Kaajro directed by Nitin Bhaskar.
- Bhimrao Mude's Bardo has been selected as the best Marathi film.
- Best Malayalam film is Kalla Nottam and Best Manipuri Film is Eigi Kona.
- Two Films have been selected for Best Odia Film Award.
- They are Sala Budhar Badla directed by Dr Sabyasachi Mohapatra and Kalira Atita Directed by Nila Madhab Panda.
- Best Punjabi Film is Rab Da Radio 2, Best Tamil film is Asuran and Best Telugu film is Jersey.

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CAT member in Magsaysay Award recipient officer's plea, seventh in eight years

- There has been yet another 'recusal' from **Magsaysay Award recipient Indian Forest Services officer Sanjiv Chaturvedi's** petition by a member of the bench of the **Central Administrative Tribunal**, making it the seventh such instance since 2013.
- The observations came while hearing alleging irregularities in the lateral entry of joint secretaries in the centre.
- The member recused himself citing that his '**relative counsels**' might have appeared for respondents in the matter and he 'might' have appeared with them for those respondents.
- The order by CAT bench comprising **RN Singh and AK Bishnoi** which was pronounced on March 11, 2021, stated, "One of us (Mr RN Singh, Members (J)) remembers that he has not been counsel for any of the parties in the matter(s) referred to above.

Filmfare Awards 2021 conferred

- The star-studded **66th Filmfare Awards** saw Anubhav Sinha's 'Thappad' recording the most wins with seven awards, followed by 'Gulabo Sitabo', winning six, both emerging as big winners.

Here is a complete list of the winners:

- **Best Film:** Thappad
- **Best Film (Critics):** Prateek Vats (Eeb Allay Ooo!)
- **Best Director:** Om Raut (Tanhaji - The Unsung Warrior)
- **Best Actor in a Leading Role (Male):** Irrfan Khan (posthumous) (Angrezi Medium)
- **Best Actor in a Leading Role (Female):** Taapsee Pannu (Thappad)
- **Best Actor in a Leading Role (Male - Critics):** Amitabh Bachchan - (Gulabo Sitabo)
- **Best Actor in a Leading Role (Female - Critics):** Tillotama Shome - (Is Love Enough? SIR)
- **Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Male):** Saif Ali Khan (Tanhaji - The Unsung Warrior)
- **Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Female):** Farrokh Jaffar (Gulabo Sitabo)
- **Best Debutant Actress:** Alaya F (Jawaani Jaaneman)
- **Best Debutant Director:** Rajesh Krishnan (Lootcase)
- **Best Story:** Anubhav Sinha and Mrunmayee Lagoo (Thappad)
- **Best Screenplay:** Rohena Gera (Is Love Enough? SIR)
- **Best Dialogue:** Juhi Chaturvedi (Gulabo Sitabo)
- **Best Cinematography:** Avik Mukhopadhyay (Gulabo Sitabo)
- **Best Editing:** Yasha Pushpa Ramchandani (Thappad)
- **Best VFX:** Prasad Sutar from NY VFXWala (Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior)
- **Best Action:** Ramazan Bulut, RP Yadav (Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior)
- **Best Music Album:** Pritam Chakraborty (Ludo)
- **Best Lyricist:** Gulzar - Chhappak (Chhappak)

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- **Best Singer (Male):** Raghav Chaitanya - Ek Tukda Dhoop (Thappad)
- **Best Singer (Female):** Asees Kaur- Malang (Malang)
- **Best Choreography:** Farah Khan for Dil Bechara (Dil Bechara)
- **Best Background Score:** Mangesh Urmila Dhakde (Thappad)
- **Best Sound Design:** Kaamod Kharade (Thappad)
- **Best Production Design:** Manasi Dhruv Mehta (Gulabo Sitabo)
- **Best Costume Design:** Veera Kapur Ee (Gulabo Sitabo)
- Lifetime Achievement Award: **Irrfan Khan**
- **Best Short Film (Fiction):** Arjun
- **Best Short Film (Non-Fiction):** Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary
- **Best Short Film (Popular Choice):** Devi
- **Best Short Film Actor:** Arnav Abdagire (Arjun)
- **Best Short Film Actress:** Purni Savardekar (The First Wedding)
- All in all, **though 2020 was a tough year** for the film industry still they came together as one to ensure that the magic of cinema would not be extinguished amidst the raging coronavirus pandemic.
- The **66th edition of the Filmfare Awards** was hosted by **Riteish Deshmukh, Rajkumar Rao, and Manish Paul.**

Important MOU's

State Bank of India joins JPMorgan's blockchain-based payment network

- **State Bank of India** has tied up with **JPMorgan** to use the **US bank's blockchain technology** to speed up overseas transactions.
- The tie up is expected to **reduce SBI customers' transaction costs** and time taken for payments.
- Time taken to resolve cross-border payments-related inquiries can be reduced to a few hours from up to a fortnight.
- This will help cross-border payments reach beneficiaries faster and using limited steps.
- With this, SBI has become the first bank in India to go live on the blockchain-based payment network of JPMorgan on implementation and exploring application as part of the network to better serve our clients.

Cochin Port and FTWZ, signs MoU for Cryogenic Warehouse, Aviation Fuel Terminal

- As part of the **Maritime India Summit 2021**, Cochin Port Trust has signed three MoU's for developing a Free Trade Warehousing Zone, Cryogenic Warehouse and Aviation Fuel Terminal.
- The FTWZ, proposed at Vallarpadam at an estimated cost of **Rs.85 crore**, will facilitate storing, handling and rendering value-added services to both dry and cold storage of cargo and help generate jobs to at least 50 persons.

Port Trust signs MoUs worth Rs 30,000 crore

- The **Visakhapatnam Port Trust (VPT)** has signed MoUs worth about **Rs 30,000 crore** with port-led industries and government agencies ahead of the Maritime India Summit 2021, which will be held in virtual mode from March 2.

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KVGB inks pact with Our Food

- The Dharwad-headquartered **Karnataka Vikas Grameena Bank (KVGB)** has signed memorandum of understanding (MoU) with **Our Food Pvt Ltd**, Visakhapatnam, for **arranging cost-effective processing units to farmers through the bank loan.**
- They must instead **process** their produce and sell it to fetch better prices.”

Cabinet nods MoUs with France, Fiji

- The agreements are in the fields of renewable energy and agriculture. The **Cabinet on approved two Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with France and Fiji.**
- The **MoU with France** is on renewable energy (RE) cooperation, and was signed in January.

Textiles Ministry sign MoU with Agriculture Ministry to amplify sericulture activities in the country

- **Ministry of Textiles and Ministry of Agriculture signed an MoU** to amplify sericulture activities in the country in the presence of **Textiles Minister Smriti Irani and Minister of State for Agriculture Parshottam Rupala.**
- The MoU will focus on establishing tree based agro-forestry models in sericulture and exploring possibilities of activities through **Krishi Vigyan Kendras.**
- Ms Irani said it will enhance training, boost technology and create sustainable livelihood for silk farmers or rearers.
- On the eve of International Women's Day, **Ms Irani distributed Buniyaad Reeling Machines to women silk reelers** with an aim to eradicate unhygienic and obsolete Thigh Reeling practice.

WCD Ministry signs agreement with Invest India in New Delhi

- **Union Ministry of Women and Child Development** signed an agreement with **Invest India in New Delhi to enhance cooperation.**
- The aim of the **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** is to enhance co-operation in the thematic areas of Nutrition, Child Protection and Development, Women Empowerment and convergent capacity building in mission mode.
- It was signed by **joint Secretary in the Ministry Aditi Das Raut and Vice President, Invest India, Hindol Sengupta.**
- To formulate, design and conduct strategic research for the Ministry, **DRISHTI** under Invest India will conduct input and output analysis research, and other research as per requirement including coordinating with research agencies for primary, secondary and tertiary research.

ICSI signs MoU with CUSAT

- The Institute of Company Secretaries of India has **signed a memorandum of understanding** with the **Cochin University of Science and Technology** for **academic collaboration** in which three top students from the School of Legal Studies of the University will be bestowed with the **ICSI Signature Gold Award.**

India signs MoU with Maldives on Cooperation in Sports & Youth Affairs

- The Union Cabinet was approved **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment of Maldives** for **cooperation in Sports and Youth Affairs.**

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- The MoU was signed in November last year.
- Bilateral exchange programmes in the field of sports and youth affairs between India and Maldives will help in expanding knowledge and expertise in the area of sports science, sports medicine, coaching techniques, participation in youth festivals and camps.

WE HUB make ties up with UK varsity

- **WE HUB**, an exclusive incubator for **women-led startups**, has signed an agreement with the University of Bolton, based in the UK.
- The partnership, valid for two years, will help women entrepreneurs at the **WE HUB** get access to the UK market.
- “It will also open communication with relevant ecosystem players for both parties for future collaborations,” **Deepthi Ravula, Chief Executive Officer of WE HUB**, said.
- Earlier, she signed the agreement with Kondal Reddy Kandadi, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of Bolton.

India-UK Free Trade Agreement: Textile Ministry

- The **Textile Ministry** has put its weight behind an early limited **Free Trade Deal between India and the UK** which, it says, must include tariff reduction for textile and clothing items, resulting in possible gains for the sector, officials have said.
- “The textile industry is very keen that India should sign an early **Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** with the UK as it could benefit enormously from tariff cuts.
- The Textile Ministry has thus conveyed to the Commerce Ministry that a limited trade deal, including textiles and clothing, among other products, should be considered for an early conclusion.

To Set Up Space Technology Incubation Centre ISRO & NIT Rourkela Signs MOU

- **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and National Institute of Technology(NIT), Rourkela** signed an **MoU for setting up a Space Technology Incubation Centre(S-TIC)**.
- The MoU was signed after ISRO agreed to set up a Space Technology Incubation Centre(S-TIC) at NIT Rourkela.

Benefits :

- This collaboration with ISRO will **open up new opportunities for research and development as well as space start-ups**.

About Space Technology Incubation Centre(S-TIC) :

- The S-TIC will **nurture the young academia with innovative research aptitude for carrying out research and product development in the field of space technology and applications**.
- This S-TIC will enable start-ups to build applications and products that could be used in future space missions
- It will also offer a great opportunity for academia to collaborate with industries and contribute in Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan in the Space Technology sector initiated by ISRO.
- ISRO will **provide an annual Grant-in-Aid of Rs. 2 crore for 2 years to NIT-R as seed money** for setting up of the STIC.

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RISE model of cloud services : HCL Tech partner with SAP

- **HCL Technologies** announced its support for **RISE with SAP**, an offering by SAP that helps clients take their business-critical elements into the cloud, thereby accelerating their digital transformation and the value realization of their investments on their journey to becoming an “**intelligent enterprise.**”
- **HCL’s partnership** with **SAP** will enable organizations to move to the **cloud SaaS model** of **RISE with SAP** using **HCL’s** digital and application capabilities, while leveraging their existing investments in **SAP** configuration and extensions.

Cabinet gave nod to sign MoC between India & Japan in Water Resources field

- The **Union Cabinet** was apprised of the **Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC)** signed between **Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation of Ministry of Jal Shakti and Water and Disaster Management Bureau, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism of Japan** in the field of **Water Resources.**
- This MoC was signed for development of a long-term cooperation in the field of Water and Delta management, and Water technology in order to increase the exchange of information, knowledge, technology and scientific allied experience, as well as implementation of joint projects between the two countries.
- This MoC will help achieving water security, improved irrigation facility and sustainability in water resources development.

Cabinet approved to signing of MoU between UPSC, Afghanistan's IARCSC

- The **Union Cabinet** has approved the signing of a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** between **Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), India** and **Independent Administrative Reforms and Civil Services Commission (IARCSC), Afghanistan.**
- The MoU will strengthen the relationship between **IARCSC and UPSC.**
- It will facilitate sharing of experience and expertise of both the institutions in the area of recruitment.
- The MoU includes exchange of information and expertise including books, manuals and other documents which are not of a confidential nature and sharing of expertise in the use of **Information Technology (IT)** for the preparation of written examinations and holding of Computer Based Recruitment Tests and Online Examinations.

JNPT, CNB Logitech signing a ink pact for a digital port-yard ecosystem

- **State-owned Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT)** has signed a memorandum of understanding with **CNB Logitech** to monitor, track and optimize the movement of 5 million containers through the port located near Mumbai.
- The partnership seeks to enhance efficiency and help India improve its ranking in the “**Ease of Doing Business.**”

MoUs signed to speed up work - national clean air programme

- To improve air quality of 132 cities under the action plan proposed in the **National Clean Air Programme**, a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with **different stakeholders** were signed in the presence of the union environment minister Prakash Javadekar.

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- Prakash Javadekar, Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change on the occasion emphasised the idea of **'Swachh Bharat, Swachh Vayu'** and urged different bodies and individuals to work towards the goal of curbing air pollution by **roughly 20 per cent** in the upcoming four years.
- "It is not an easy task but a tough challenge which we all need to achieve together," he added.
- Regretting despite allocating funds for **6,000 e-buses to different cities**, **only 600 buses have been procured and operational.**
- He warned that if any town fails to utilise the funds sanctioned for procurement, the allocation will be moved to other cities.

PM Modi and Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina hold meet in Dhaka and India - Bangladesh to sign several MoUs

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** will hold talks with his **Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina in Dhaka.**
- India and Bangladesh will also sign **several MoUs** following the talks.
- **Delegation level talks** will also be held before the signing of agreements.
- The two leaders will virtually **inaugurate some development projects.**
- Prime Minister Modi will also visit **Jeshoreshwari temple at Satkhira** and perform puja.
- He will also visit **Bangabandhu Mausoleum Complex in Tungipara, Gopalganj** and pay tribute to the father of the nation of **Bangladesh Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.**
- Mr Modi will also participate in a **Community Reception at Orakandi.**
- Before leaving for Delhi, Prime Minister Modi will also meet **Bangladesh President Md Abdul Hamid.**

India, Bangladesh ink five MoUs

- **India and Bangladesh** signed **5 MoUs** in the **fields of trade, IT and setting up of sports facilities** on the concluding day of the 2-day long official visit of **Prime Minister Narendra Modi.**
- **Five MoUs** were signed between **India and Bangladesh** in various fields like **disaster management, ICT equipment, and sports** in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in Dhaka.
- Wrapping up the visit, the **delegation level talks** were held between **Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.**
- Both the leaders discussed the progress achieved in areas of health, trade, connectivity, energy, developmental cooperation and many more.
- Prime Minister Modi and Sheikh Hasina discussed bilateral issues covering areas of commerce and trade, water resources, security and defence, power and energy among others.
- Spokesperson of the MEA mentioned that the meeting between the Prime Ministers reiterates the highest priority India attaches to Bangladesh.
- Several important announcements were also made after the summit meeting between the Prime Ministers.
- Both leaders agreed that a direct passenger train named **'Mitali Express'** will run between **Dhaka and New Jalpaiguri.**
- India gifted **109 ambulances to Bangladesh** and also **1.2 million doses** of the Covishield vaccine

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SpiceJet and Avenue Capital signs MoU

- Low-cost carrier and country's largest regional player, homegrown carrier **SpiceJet** said it has **signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with New York-based Avenue Capital Group, for financing, acquisition and sale and lease-back of 50 new planes.**
- The MoU sets out the next steps and conditions upon which Avenue, as part of the deal, will assist with placing **SpiceJet's new aircraft portfolio.**
- It includes sale and lease-back of and also the assumption of ownership of potentially up to 50 of these aircraft.
- **Avenue Capital Group specializes** in the field of aircraft leasing and has identified the new planes to be ordered by **Spice Jet** as a unique opportunity for investment.

Bharat Biotech, Biovet and Sapigen Biologix collaborate with CSIR-IICT

- **Vaccine developers Bharat Biotech International, Biovet and Sapigen Biologix** on March 29 collaborated with **CSIR-Indian Institute of Chemical Technology** to enhance indigenous vaccines and health care solutions.
- Reportedly, **CSIR-IICT** will be funded by the pharmaceutical firms to innovate and develop affordable healthcare technologies for humans and animals.
- Initiated under the **Aatmanirbhar Bharat Vision**, the master collaborative agreement aims to strengthen the innovation ecosystem by pooling the expertise of CSIR labs.

HPCL secure Shapoorji Pallonji stake in cooperation with LNG terminal

- **State-run Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL)** will buy out the share of its JV (joint venture) partner **SP Ports Pvt. Ltd (SPPPL)** in 5 million metric tonnes per annum (MMTPA) LNG re-gasification terminal at **Chhara, Gujarat.**
- HPCL, in a regulatory filing on, March 28, announced that it has "has entered into a share purchase agreement (SPA) dated March 27, 2021 ("**Share Purchase Agreement**") for acquisition of 50% of the paid-up equity share capital of the Target Entity from SP Ports Private Limited.
- "The company further stated that the acquisition is likely to be concluded by March 31, 2021, and doesn't require regulatory approval.

Revision Points

Organizations	Purpose
State Bank of India & JPMorgan	US bank's blockchain technology to speed up overseas transactions.
Cochin Port and FTWZ	Cryogenic Warehouse, Aviation Fuel Terminal
Karnataka Vikas Grameena Bank & Our Food	For arranging cost-effective processing units to farmers

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France & Fiji	Renewable energy and Agriculture
Textiles Ministry & Agriculture Ministry	To amplify sericulture activities
Ministry of Women and Child Development & Invest India	To enhance Cooperation
ICSI & CUSAT	For academic collaboration
India & Maldives	Cooperation in Sports & Youth Affairs
WE HUB & University of Bolton	To help women entrepreneurs
ISRO & NIT Rourkela	For setting up a Space Technology Incubation Centre
HCL Technologies & SAP	RISE model of cloud services
India & Japan	Water Resources field
UPSC & Afghanistan's IARCSC	To strengthen relationship
Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust & CNB Logitech	For a digital port-yard ecosystem
India & Bangladesh	In the fields of trade, IT and setting up of sports facilities
Spice Jet & Avenue Capital	Financing, acquisition and sale and lease-back of 50 new planes
Bharat Biotech, Biovet and Sapigen Biologix & CSIR-IICT	To enhance indigenous vaccines and health care solutions.

Important Summit & Conference

Nirmala Sitharaman attends virtual G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting

- **Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman** has participated virtually in the **First G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (FMCBG)** meeting under the Italian Presidency to discuss policy actions for transformative and equitable recovery.
- **Purpose** : to discuss policy actions for transformative and equitable recovery along with other issues on the agenda including global economic outlook, financial sector issues, financial inclusion and sustainable finance.
- It must be noted that this meeting is follow-up for the upcoming **2021 G20 Summit**, the sixteenth meeting of Group of Twenty, scheduled to take place in **Rome, Italy, on 30–31 October 2021**.
- The Finance Minister also stressed the importance of transfer of green technologies and scaling up of climate finance.

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Health Minister lauds contributions of medical professionals in pandemic

- Health Minister **Harsh Vardhan** has virtually addressed the **Global Indian Physicians Congress, organised by the Global Association for Physicians of Indian Origin (GAPIO)**, through video conference.
- Vardhan expressed his appreciation to GAPIO which since its inception in 2011 has endeavoured to bring 1.4 million physicians of Indian-origin across the world on a single platform to facilitate exchange of knowledge, skills and research.

About GAPIO :

- GAPIO stands to empower physicians of Indian origin to achieve highest professional standards, to provide affordable good quality healthcare, to contribute to local and regional community development and thereby help to reduce health inequalities and alleviate suffering globally.

PM Modi initiate Maritime India Summit-2021

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate **Maritime India Summit-2021** through video conferencing.
- The three-day Maritime India Summit -2021 is being organized by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways on a virtual platform [www.maritime india summit.in](http://www.maritimeindiasummit.in).
- The Summit will visualize a roadmap for India's Maritime sector for next decade and will work to propel India to the forefront of the Global Maritime Sector.
- Eminent speakers from several countries are expected to attend the Summit and explore the potential business opportunities and investments in Indian Maritime domain.
- **Denmark is the partner country for the three-day summit.**

Health Minister Harsh Vardhan inaugurates second edition of Global-Bio India 2021

- The **Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences and Health & Family Welfare Dr. Harsh Vardhan** inaugurated the **second edition of Global Bio-India-2021** in New Delhi through virtual mode.
- The 3-day event will showcase the **strength and opportunities of the India's biotechnology sector at national level and to the global community.**
- The three day event being held from 1st to 3rd March 2021 has been organized on a digital platform.
- The theme for this year is **"Transforming lives"** with the tagline **"Biosciences to Bio-economy"**.
- Being one of the largest biotechnology stakeholder conglomerates, this event is being co-organised by the Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science & Technology, Government of India along with its Public Sector Undertaking, and **Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC)** in partnership with industry association Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Association of Biotechnology Led Enterprises (ABLE) and Invest India.
- The Biotechnology sector has emerged as an integral part of the Indian economy over the past few decades, and the Government of India is playing a transformative and catalytic role in building a **USD 150 billion bio-economy by 2025.**

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- The sector is recognized as one of the key drivers for India to achieve its USD 5 trillion target.

I&B Minister Holds meeting with OTT industry representatives

- **Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar** held a meeting with representatives of Over the Top, OTT industry and explained to them the provisions of the new OTT rules.
- The Minister mentioned that the Government has done several rounds of consultation with the OTT players in the past and stressed the need for self-regulation.
- Informing them about the provisions of the rules, Mr. Javadekar said, it merely requires them to disclose information and that there is no requirement of registration of any kind with the Ministry.
- He added that a form for this will be ready soon.
- **It was highlighted** that the rules focus on self classification of content instead of any form of censorship.

India-Sweden Virtual Summit 2021

- Prime Minister **Shri Narendra Modi** and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Sweden **H.E. Stefan Löfven** held a **Virtual Summit where they discussed bilateral issues** and other regional and multilateral issues of mutual interest.
- This was the fifth interaction between the two leaders since **2015**.

About the Summit :

- Both the leaders underlined that the longstanding close relations between India and Sweden were based on shared values of democracy, rule of law, pluralism, equality, freedom of speech, and respect for human rights.
- They reaffirmed their strong commitment to work for multilateralism, rules-based international order, counter terrorism and peace and security.
- They also acknowledged the growing salience of India's partnership with the European Union and EU countries.
- The leaders also noted the growing membership of the India-Sweden joint initiative the Leadership Group on Industry Transition (LeadIT) that was launched during the UN Climate Action Summit in September 2019 in New York.
- The two leaders also discussed the Covid-19 situation including the vaccination drive and stressed the need for vaccine equity by providing urgent and affordable access to vaccines across all nations.
- The two leaders reviewed the extensive ongoing engagement between India and Sweden, and expressed satisfaction at the implementation of the Joint Action Plan and Joint Innovation Partnership agreed during Prime Minister Modi's visit to Sweden in 2018. They explored avenues of further diversifying the themes under the rubric of these partnerships.

Dr Harsh Vardhan addresses inaugural session of TechBharat 2021

- Union health minister, **Dr Harsh Vardhan** addresses the inaugural session of **TechBharat 2021**, **Laghu Udyog Bharati** and **IMS Foundation** organized the 2nd edition of the conclave bringing together stakeholders from the HealthTech sector on a virtual platform.

About TechBharat 2021 :

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

- Techbharat is facilitating interactions & deliberations between thousands of domestic & global participants, including policy makers, government representatives, industry members, investors & start-ups to nurture resourceful partnerships and boost growth in the sectors.
- The Pradhan Mantri Atma Nirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana, with a massive outlay of over 64 thousand crore rupees over the next six years, will develop capacities of primary, secondary and tertiary care, health care systems.

Culture Minister inaugurates All-Women's Art Exhibition titled 'Akshya Patra' in New Delhi

- Minister of Culture and Tourism **Prahlad Singh Patel** inaugurated the **All-Women's Art Exhibition** titled '**Akshya Patra**' at **Rabindra Bhavan** Galleries in **New Delhi** on the occasion of **International Women's Day**.
- He also congratulated Lalit Kala Akademi for curating this encouraging opportunity for all the female artists around India and the world which has given them a platform where they are showcasing their work made with lots of emotions and the story of their lives.
- The exhibition will continue till **20th of this month and showcase more than 250 artworks from over 12 countries**.

India Chair the First Meeting of BRICS CGETI

- The first Meeting of the **BRICS Contact Group on Economic and Trade Issues (CGETI)** was held under India's Chairship from 9th till 11th of this month.
- The **theme of BRICS this year is -"BRICS at 15: Intra BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation, and Consensus"**.
- India presented the calendar of events for BRICS CGETI 2021, which included the priority areas for deliverables, schedule and scope of the MSME roundtable conference workshop on Services Statistics, and the BRICS Trade Fair.
- Till September, inter sessional deliberations will be carried out to reach consensus amongst the BRICS countries.

First Quad Leaders Summit held Virtually

- **On March 12, 2021, the first historic virtual summit of Quadrilateral leaders** began.
- The virtual summit was attended by the **leaders of India, Japan, US and Australia**
- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi**, President **Biden** (US), Prime Minister **Scott Morrison** (Australia) Prime Minister **Yoshihide Suga** (Japan) addressed the first Quad leaders virtual summit.
- In November 2017, India, Japan, the US and Australia gave shape to the long-pending proposal of setting up the Quad to develop a new strategy to keep the critical sea routes in the Indo-Pacific free of any influence.

Purpose :

- To **ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific region** and to cooperate on maritime, cyber and economic security, issues vital to the four democracies in the face of challenges from china.
- This agenda, **covering Covid-19 vaccines**
- To enhance cooperation and raise mutual ambition as they address accelerating climate change.

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- The four countries plan to establish a series of working groups that will focus on climate change; critical and emerging technologies, including working to set technology standards and norms and jointly developing some of the critical technologies of the future

About Quad :

- Quad is an **informal strategic forum** comprising India, the United States, Japan, and Australia.
- The idea of QUAD was first brought up by the then **Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe back in 2007**.
- **QUAD is also known as the Asian NATO.**
- This was the first-ever meeting between the national heads of the QUAD countries.

PM Modi inaugurate Global Ayurveda Festival Virtually

- **On March 12, 2021**, Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** inaugurated **the fourth edition of the Global Ayurveda Festival** through video conference.
- This festival will be held virtually between **March 12 and March 19**.
- Union Sports and Youth Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju, Union Minister V Muraleedharan, the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) President Uday Shankar and former FICCI President Dr Sangita Reddy will also be present at the event.
- **Muraleedharan is the Chairman of the Organizing Committee of the festival**
- **Note** : The festival, which was scheduled to be held in **Angamaly in May 2020**, was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The **second edition of the Global Ayurveda Festival had also been inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Kozhikode.**

About the Festival :

- It is the **largest Ayurvedic event** across the world
- It witnesses the largest gathering of experts, stakeholders and business explorers from the field of Ayurveda.
- The festival will include international seminars, a global exhibition and business meet.
- The festival will hold an all-time record in the number of delegates, the number of scientists presenting papers and the number of participating countries and institutions.
- It will feature lectures by **35 internationally renowned scientists** and more than **150 Indian scientists**.
- It was Led by the Centre for Innovation in Science and Social Action (CISSA), the Ayurveda Medical Association of India (AMAI), the Ayurveda Hospital Management Association, the meet is organised in collaboration with **14 organisations**

PM Modi initiate the International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be speaking at the **International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure**.
- Mr. Modi noted that this is an important conference which will deliberate on a subject that is of great concern for the entire humanity.

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About ICDRI:

- The **International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (ICDRI 2021)** is an interactive virtual conference which follows **International Workshops on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (IWDR)** held in 2018 and 2019.
- ICDRI is the annual international conference of the **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)** in partnership with member countries, organizations and institutions to strengthen the global discourse on disaster and climate resilient infrastructure.

Chemicals & Fertilizer Minister to inaugurate 11th edition of India Chem-2021

- **Chemicals and Fertilizer Minister Sadananda Gowda** will inaugurate the **11th edition of India Chem-2021**.
- The **theme** is - **"India: Global Manufacturing Hub for Chemicals and Petrochemicals"**.
- Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals, in association with **FICCI**, is organizing the 3 day India Chem in New Delhi.
- Events such as **Global CEOs Round Table**, and **Conclave on Global Chemical Industry** will be organised during India Chem.
- This event will highlight the investment potential in Indian Chemicals and Petrochemicals Industry.

About India Chem-2021:

- "India Chem is **one of the largest composite events** of the chemical and petrochemical sector in the **Asia-Pacific Region**.
- Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals, in association with FICCI, is organizing the 11th edition of **India Chem- 2021 during March 17-19th in New Delhi**," read a release by the ministry.

Kiren Rijju meets IPU President Duarte Pacheco for holds meeting in New Delhi

- Union Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports **Shri Kiren Rijju** met the **President of Inter Parliamentary Union, (IPU) Duarte Pacheco**.
- Mr Duarte Pacheco to **discuss cooperation among the international parliamentarians, especially in the field of Youth Affairs and Sports in New Delhi**.

About the meeting :

- Discussed about **India's Fit India Movement, Yoga** and also discussed how to start certain sports-related activities in the country in a controlled manner despite COVID 19.
- To arrange a **World Youth Parliamentarian meeting where the younger Parliamentarians can come together and promote some fitness activities during the youth exchange of different countries**.
- **Secretary , Sports Shri Ravi Mittal and Secretary, Youth Affairs Ms. Usha Sharma** was also present during the meeting.

Sixth India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Women's Forum held Virtually

- **On March 16, 2021, The Sixth India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Women's Forum meeting** was held virtually.
- The Forum discussed key issues that contribute towards the transformation of women's lives

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- At the end of the conference, a joint declaration was also issued highlighting the shared IBSA goals and commitments for achieving gender equality in all spheres of life.

About IBSA Women's Forum :

- The India-Brazil-South Africa Trilateral Cooperation Forum is a unique platform which brings together India, Brazil and South Africa, three large democracies and major economies from three different continents.
- The meeting was led by the **Ministry of Women and Child Development**, Government of India.
- IBSA is committed to inclusive sustainable development, in pursuit of the well-being for their citizens and those from the other developing nations.
- The principles, norms and values underpinning the IBSA Dialogue Forum are participatory democracy, respect for human rights, the Rule of Law and the strengthening of multilateralism. IBSA lays efforts in South-South cooperation beyond the conventional areas of exchange of experts and training.

To Boost Bilateral Cooperation In Research And Development US India Artificial Intelligence Initiative Launched

- The **Indo-U.S. Science and Technology Forum's (IUSSTF) US India Artificial Intelligence (USIAI) Initiative** has been launched.
- IUSSTF is a bilateral organization funded by the department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India and the US Department of States.

About USIAI :

- USIAI Initiative **focuses on Artificial Intelligence (AI) cooperation in critical areas** prioritized by both countries.
- It will serve as a **platform to discuss opportunities, challenges, and barriers for bilateral AI research and development collaboration**, enable AI innovation, help share ideas for developing an AI workforce, and recommend modes and mechanisms for catalyzing partnerships.
- The US-India AI Initiative will provide an **opportunity for key stakeholder groups to share experiences, identify new research and development areas** that would benefit from synergistic activities, discuss the emerging AI landscape, and address the challenges of developing an AI workforce.

Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank and Director General of UNESCO holds virtual meeting

- **Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank** held a virtual meeting with **Director General UNESCO, Ms Audrey Azoulay** in New Delhi.
- They discussed key issues of mutual importance including **National Education Policy**, India's response to COVID Pandemic especially in the education sector.
- Mr Pokhriyal said, Government has ensured that education reaches even the last child in the remotest part of the country.
- He also spoke about **Manodarpan**, the government's initiative to provide online **psychosocial support to students, teachers and families** for their mental health and emotional wellbeing.

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- The Minister also mentioned that competitive entrance exams for almost **23 lakh students**, the largest entrance examinations in the world were conducted successfully and safely during the covid pandemic.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan addresses 7th annual summit of NATHEALTH

- **Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare addressed the 7th annual summit of NATHEALTH.**
- The Summit was Focusing on 'Indian Health system expansion in post-COVID era'
- It is a **2-day virtual summit held on 25 and 26 March 2021.**
- The Summit was organised by NATHEALTH-Healthcare Federation of India, to bring the healthcare industry together to engage, collaborate and deliberate, to unveil a path together and emerge resilient in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

About Pradhan Mantri Aatma Nirbhar Swaasthya Yojana :

- **Pradhan Mantri Aatma Nirbhar Swaasthya Yojana** will strengthen the healthcare system to meet the challenges of current and future pandemics.
- The main objective of Pradhan Mantri Aatma Nirbhar Swaasthya Yojana is to **strengthen health systems across the continuum of care to meet challenges of the current and future pandemics** along with expanding and building robust IT-enabled surveillance systems to track and contain the spread of diseases."

PM Modi and Finland PM Sanna Marin confine Virtual Summit

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi will hold a Virtual Summit with Prime Minister of Finland Sanna Marin.**
- During the Summit, the two leaders will cover the entire **spectrum of bilateral relationship** and will also exchange views on regional and global issues of mutual interest.
- The Virtual Summit will provide a blueprint for the future expansion and diversification of India-Finland Partnership.
- **India and Finland** enjoy warm and friendly relations based on shared values of democracy, freedom and rules based international order.
- Both countries have very close cooperation in the areas of trade and **investment, education, innovation, Science and Technology as well as Research and Development.**
- Both sides also have ongoing collaboration in the joint development of a Quantum Computer using Artificial Intelligence to address societal challenges.
- **Around 100 Finnish companies are actively operating in India** in various sectors such as telecom, elevators, machinery and energy including Renewable Energy.
- Around 30 Indian companies are also active in Finland mainly in the IT, auto-components and hospitality sector.

EAM attend 9th Ministerial Conference of 'Heart of Asia - Istanbul Process on Afghanistan' in Tajikistan

- **External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar will attend the 9th Ministerial Conference of Heart of Asia - Istanbul Process on Afghanistan at Dushanbe in Tajikistan.**
- Dr Jaishankar reached Dushanbe on a three day visit.
- He called on **President of Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani** before the commencement of the Heart of Asia Conference.

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- Mr Ghani and Dr Jaishankar shared the perspectives on the peace process.
- As the lead country for Trade, Commerce and Investment Confidence Building Measure under **Heart of Asia - Istanbul Process**, India has made concerted efforts for strengthening regional connectivity for the greater economic integration of Afghanistan with the region.
- A dedicated Air Freight Corridor between cities of **India and Afghanistan** and operationalisation of **Chabahar Port** in Iran are steps in that direction.
- India, as an important stakeholder for peace, prosperity and stability in Afghanistan has played a constructive **role in the international processes on Afghanistan**.
- India has engaged regional and international stakeholders on Afghanistan.
- The visit will further enhance the outreach to Central Asian countries with a special focus on Afghanistan.

Union Minister Piyush Goyal take the chair 3rd GCM of BIS

- **Consumer Affairs Minister Piyush Goyal** virtually presided the **Third Governing Council Meeting of the Bureau of Indian Standards**.
- He reviewed the process of making Indian Standards and their implementation with BIS officials, senior officials from different Ministries or Regulators.
- Mr Goyal said, there is a need to change the approach of the country towards standardization.
- He said, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given the three Mantras for faster economic development **SPEED, SKILL and SCALE**.
- Mr Goyal said, now it is time to add the fourth dimension of **STANDARD** into this.
- **The meeting was attended by** the Minister of State for Consumer Affairs Raosaheb Patil Danve, MP Rajya Sabha Mahesh Poddar, Secretary, Consumer Affairs Leena Nandan, DG, BIS P.K. Tiwari, Chairman of Quality Council of India Adil Zainulbhai and other senior officials of the Ministry and Bureau of Indian Standards.

Revision Points

Conference/Summits	Venue/Host Country	Chaired By/Theme/Addressed By/Others
Third Governing Council Meeting of the Bureau of Indian Standards	Virtual	Piyush Goyal
9th Ministerial Conference of 'Heart of Asia - Istanbul Process on Afghanistan'	Virtual	Attended by Dr S Jaishankar
Sixth India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Women's Forum meeting	Virtual	Led by the Ministry of Women and Child Development
7th annual summit of NATHEALTH	Virtual	Indian Health system expansion



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		in post-COVID era'
First G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (FMCBG) meeting	Rome, Italy	
Global Indian Physicians Congress		Organised by the Global Association for Physicians of Indian Origin
Maritime India Summit-2021	Virtual	Denmark is the partner country
2 nd edition of Global Bio-India-2021	Virtual	Transforming lives Tagline - "Biosciences to Bio-economy".
India-Sweden Virtual Summit 2021	Virtual	5th interaction between the two leaders since 2015.
TechBharat 2021		Addressed by Dr Harsh Vardhan
All-Women's Art Exhibition titled 'Akshya Patra'	New Delhi	
BRICS Contact Group on Economic and Trade Issues	Virtual	BRICS at 15: Intra BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation, and Consensus
4 th Global Ayurveda Festival	Virtual	Muraleedharan is the Chairman of the Organizing Committee of the festival
International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure	Virtual	
11th edition of India Chem-2021		India: Global Manufacturing Hub for Chemicals and Petrochemicals

Important Defence News

In a first, Air Force to participate in Exercise Desert Flag VI in UAE

- The **Indian Air Force (IAF)** will participate in the Exercise Desert Flag-VI along with the air forces of the **UAE, the US, France, Saudi Arabia, South Korea and Bahrain** for the first time.
- The exercise is scheduled from **March 3 to 21** at the **Al-Dhafra air base in the United Arab Emirates (UAE)**.

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- The Exercise Desert Flag is an annual multinational large force employment warfare exercise hosted by the UAE Air Force.
- The IAF is participating for the first time in Exercise Desert Flag-VI along with air forces of United Arab Emirates, United States of America, France, Saudi Arabia, South Korea and Bahrain.
- The IAF is participating with six Su-30 MKI, two C-17 and one IL-78 tanker aircraft.
- The C-17 Globemaster will provide support for the induction and de-induction of the IAF contingent.
- The aim of the exercise is to provide operational exposure to the participating forces, while training them to undertake simulated air combat operations in a controlled environment.
- The participating forces will get an opportunity to enhance their operational capabilities, it said, adding that there will also be a mutual exchange of best practices.

Suryakirans, Sarang and Tejas to take part in Lanka Air Force's 70th anniversary celebrations

- **Suryakirans, Sarang and Light Combat Aircraft Tejas** will participate in an air show in Colombo from **March 3 to 5** as part of the **70th-anniversary celebrations of the Sri Lankan Air Force**.
- The IAF's aerobatic display teams, the fixed wing 'Suryakirans' and rotary wing 'Sarang', along with Tejas arrived at Colombo
- The IAF and SLAF have seen active exchanges and interactions for a number of years in diverse fields like training, operational exchanges and professional military education courses.
- IAFs participation in the 70th-anniversary celebration of SLAF is a further manifestation of the strong professional bonds that the two air forces share.
- The **IAF Suryakiran Aerobatic Team (SKAT)** had earlier toured Sri Lanka in 2001 for the 50th-anniversary celebrations of SLAF.

India signs pact with Philippines for supply of BrahMos missile

- **India** and the **Philippines** have signed a key agreement to **facilitate government-to-government deals on military hardware, including the potential supply of BrahMos cruise missiles**.
- The BrahMos missile is produced by an **India-Russian** joint venture "**BrahMos Aerospace**" and it can be launched from submarines, ships, aircraft or from land platforms.
- The pact was signed by under-secretary Raymundo Elefante of the Philippines' department of national defense and Indian ambassador Shambu Kumaran at Camp Aguinaldo, headquarters of the Filipino armed forces
- It is the **fastest supersonic cruise missile** in the world.
- Currently the missile is used only by India, however several countries including Philippines, Vietnam, South Africa, Egypt, Oman, Chile and Brunei have expressed interest in the procurement of the missile.

DRDO successfully flight test SFDR technology

- The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** has **successfully tested a flight demonstration based on Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet (SFDR) technology** from the Integrated Test Range in Odisha's Chandipur.

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- The SFDR technology will help DRDO with the technological advantage to develop long-range air-to-air missiles (AAMs).
- The performance of the missile was monitored using the data captured by Electro Optical, Radar and Telemetry instruments deployed by ITR and confirmed successful demonstration of the mission objectives.
- The launch was monitored by senior scientists of various DRDO labs, including Defence Research & Development Laboratory (DRDL), Research Centre Imarat (RCI) and High Energy Materials Research Laboratory (HEMRL)
- The High Energy Material Research Laboratory (HEMRL) has developed the nozzle-less booster while the ramjet engine is being developed with Russian assistance.

Defence & Aerospace sectors receive FDI worth Rs 4191 crore

- **Defence and Aerospace sectors** have received foreign direct investment worth of **four thousand 191 crore rupees till January this year.**
- This was stated by **Minister of State for Defence, Shripad Naik** in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha.
- He said, the government has taken several steps to boost the indigenous manufacturing of defence items.
- He informed that out of **304 contracts, 190 contracts** have been signed with Indian vendors for capital procurement of defence equipment for armed forces in the past five years.
- Replying to another query, Mr. Naik informed that investments of more than one thousand crore rupees have been attracted by the **Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor** and **two thousand 72 crore rupees** by **Tamil Nadu Defence Industrial Corridor.**
- He added that around eight thousand defence items have been uploaded on SRIJAN portal for indigenization.
- This portal is a one stop online portal that provides access to the vendors to take up items for indigenization.

Second India - Uzbekistan joint military exercise DUSTLIK II begins in Uttarakhand

- On **March 10, 2021**, The Second edition of India - Uzbekistan joint military exercise **DUSTLIK II** commenced in Foreign Training Node **Chaubatia, Ranikhet in Uttarakhand.**
- This is the **Second Edition of annual bilateral** joint exercise between both armies.
- This bilateral joint exercise will be held on **10 days** ie) From Mach 10, 2012 to March 19,2021.
- The **first edition** of the exercise was held in **Uzbekistan in November 2019.**
- On First Edition 45 Soldiers each from Uzbekistan and Indian Army are participating in the exercise.
- Both the two countries' armies will be sharing their expertise and skills in the field of counter terrorist operations in mountainous or rural or urban scenarios under UN mandate.
- Defence Ministry Mentioned the joint exercise will definitely provide impetus to the ever growing military and diplomatic ties between the two nations and also reflects the strong resolve of both nations to counter terrorism.

Third Scorpene-Class Submarine INS Karanj, Commissioned Into Indian Navy in Mumbai

- On **March 10, 2021**, India's third **stealth Scorpene-class submarine INS Karanj**, was commissioned into the Indian Navy in **Mumbai.**

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

- The diesel electric submarine was commissioned in presence of Chief of Naval Staff Admiral **Karambir Singh** and Admiral (Retired) **VS Shekhawat**.
- The technology has been designed by **France's Naval** Group.
- The INS Karanj submarine was constructed at **Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited** under the **Make in India** program.
- Out of six Scorpene-class diesel-electric submarines INS Karanj is third and being built for Indian Navy.

Other 5 Submarines of this class:

- **1st-INS Kalvari** - already been commissioned into the Indian Navy.
- **2nd-INS Khanderi** - already been commissioned into the Indian Navy
- **4th-INS Vela** -In Underway and undergoing trials at sea.
- **5th-INS Vagir** – launched in November 2020 and is expected to be commissioned in 2022
- **6th- INS Vagsheer** – currently under construction

DRDO Developed Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) System

- **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** has Developed an important milestone in the development of **Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) System** by **proving the land-based prototype**.
- The plant was operated in endurance mode and max power mode as per the user requirements. The system is being developed by **Naval Materials Research Laboratory (NMRL)** of DRDO.
- The technology has been successfully developed with the support of industry partners **L&T and Thermax**.

About AIP System :

- AIP stands for Air Independent propulsion test which allows any submarine to stay in water for longer hours and also makes the subsurface platform deadlier by decreasing the noise levels it makes while travelling making it hard to detect.

Indian Navy extends technical assistance to stranded merchant vessel at sea

- The **Indian Navy** provided **technical assistance** to a **stranded merchant vessel at sea**.
- It was done by **seven Indian crew members**
- **INS Talwar** deployed in the **Gulf of Oman** received a broadcast call from the ship requesting for technical assistance.
- The cargo ship was drifting at sea since **March 9** owing to failure of its propulsion, power generation and navigational systems.
- The naval teams worked continuously for seven hours on board MV Nayan to operationalise her key equipment such as generators, steering pump, sea water pump, compressor and main engine.
- The naval team also assisted in operationalising navigation equipment such as GPS and navigation lights before MV Nayan could proceed for her next port.

INS Jalashwa Reaches Comoros To Deliver 1,000 Tonnes Of Rice

- On **March 14, 2021** Indian Naval Ship (INS) **Jalashwa** reached **Port Anjouan** in **Comoros** to deliver **1,000 tonnes** of rice as part of the **Mission Sagar-IV**.

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- This is the **second visit of an Indian Navy ship** to the island country within a span of one year.
- It will be received by Foreign Minister of Comoros Dhoahir Dhoulkamal in a ceremony
- **INS Jalashwa, the largest amphibious ship of Indian Navy**

About SAGAR :

- Security and Growth for all in the Indian Ocean Region
- It was started by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi in May 2020**.
- It is mainly To assist maritime neighbours such as Comoros amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Indian Army Decommissions two longest serving Artillery Systems

- **Indian Army de-commissioned two of its longest serving Artillery systems.**

The two Artillery systems are :

- **130mm M-46 Catapult self-propelled guns**
- **160mm Tampella mortars.**
- The decommissioning ceremony was held at the **Mahajan Field Firing Ranges in north-western Rajasthan.**
- These weapon systems, having been in the inventory of the Indian Army for close to 60 years, have been decommissioned to make way for newer equipment employing the latest technologies.

About 130mm M-46 Catapult :

- The 130mm Catapult has a range of more than **27 km**.
- It was a successful merger of two existing weapon systems: Vijayanta tanks and 130mm M-46 guns.
- The guns were inducted in **1981**

About 160mm Tampella mortars :

- The 160mm Tampella mortars have a range of **9.6km**.
- It was inducted after the **1962** war with China to fulfill the need for a weapon system to clear high crests of the Northern borders.
- Originally an import from the Israeli Defence Forces,
- In addition to that this mortar was successfully deployed on the Line of Control in the Leepa valley and the Hajjpir Bowl and played a crucial part in maintaining the sanctity of the Line of Control.
- The mortars also played a significant part in the **1999 Kargil war**.

Indian Navy undertakes Passage Exercise with Royal Bahrain Naval Force

- **On March 17, 2021, Indian Navy undertook Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with Royal Bahrain Naval Force Corvette Al Muharraq in the Persian Gulf under Operation Sankalp.**
- PASSEXs are conducted regularly by the Indian Navy with units of friendly foreign navies, whilst visiting each other's ports or during a **rendezvous at sea**.
- It is Mainly for **To enhance interoperability and strengthening the bilateral maritime cooperation, reassuring diaspora and merchant shipping, the INS Talwar mission deployed for Operation Sankalp**

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- **Aim** : To foster interoperability and reflect the commitments of both, India and Bahrain, to build cooperative partnerships to meet emergent maritime challenges.
- It is in pursuance of the Government of India's commitment towards ensuring the safety of Indian-flagged merchant vessels in the Gulf region.
- **Note** :Maritime Security Operations were initiated in the Gulf region on June 19, 2019, in the aftermath of the attacks on merchant ships in the Gulf of Oman.

Defence Ministry signs Rs 1,056 crore contract with Mahindra Defence Systems to supply 1,300 Light Specialist Vehicles to Indian Army

- On March 22, 2021, The defence ministry finalised a contract with Mahindra Defence Systems Ltd (MDSL) to procure 1,300 light combat vehicles for the Indian Army at a cost of Rs 1,056 crore.
- The induction of the vehicles into the army should be completed in **four years**.
- The vehicle is indigenously **designed and developed by MDSL**.
- The vehicles are extremely agile with all-round protection against small arms fire and they will assist small independent detachments.
- It is a **modern fighting vehicle and will be authorised to various fighting units for carriage of medium machine guns, automatic grenade launchers as well as anti-tank guided missiles**
- This is a flagship project showcasing the indigenous manufacturing capabilities of the defence industry and will add another milestone to the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan' and 'Make in India' initiative of the Government.

India, Pakistan, China Could Participate In Military Exercises

- **Pakistan** will hold **Pabbi-Antiterror-2021**, under the aegis of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation later this year.
- India's participation would come amid a fresh peace process between both nations.
- It would be a historic event, given that **it would be the first time that Indian forces will travel to Pakistan for any military exercise**.
- The exercise will be held at an **anti-terrorism centre in Nowshera, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**.
- The exercise was announced at the **36th meeting of Council of Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan**.
- It, under the aegis of the inter-governmental organisation comprising eight nations, will be held at the **National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) Pabbi, near Mangla Cantonment**.

About NCTC :

- National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) **imparts specialised pre-induction training to Pakistan Army units earmarked for Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and SWAT**.
- It also offers counter terrorism training services to law enforcement agencies including Pakistan Air Force, Pakistan Navy, Defence Services Guards, Strategic Plans Division, Punjab Rangers, among others.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

Indian Coast Guard ship 'Vajra' commissioned

- On March 24, 2021, Indian Coast Guard ship 'Vajra', the sixth offshore patrol vessel to enhance coastal security, was formally commissioned into service.
- Chief of Defence staff General Bipin Rawat formally unveiled a 'plaque' and the ship's name board 'Vajra' meaning 'Thunderbolt' at the Chennai Port Trust.
- The ship was indigenously designed and built by Larsen and Toubro Shipbuilding Ltd.
- It is fitted with state-of-the-art Navigation and Communication Equipment, Sensors and Machinery.
- The ship would be based at Tuticorin under the operational control of the coast guard eastern region.

Purpose :

- The ship is designed to carry one twin engine helicopter with night flying capabilities and also four high speed boats, two rigid hull inflatable boats for taking up search and rescue, law enforcement and maritime patrolling.

About the Ship :

- The ship has a 30mm gun as main armament and equipped with two FCS controlled 12.7 mm SRCG (Stabilised Remote Controlled Gun) for enhanced fighting efficiency.

North Korea fires 2 ballistic missiles into Sea of Japan

- On March 24, 2021, North Korea fired two ballistic missiles into the Sea of Japan.
- Its first such launch in a year and put pressure on the administration of the U.S. President Joe Biden.
- The launch was a violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions banning North Korea from firing ballistic missiles

Note :

- Previously in March the South Korea, and USA held a joint military exercise in Korean peninsular region.

Pakistan Test Fires Nuclear-Capable Ballistic Missile Shaheen-1A

- On March 26, 2021, Pakistan conducted a successful test-fired of a Shaheen-1A nuclear-capable surface-to-surface ballistic missile.
- It has a range of 900 kilometers.
- It was jointly designed and developed by the joint venture of National Engineering & Scientific Commission (NESCOM) and the National Defence Complex.
- The launch was witnessed by senior officials from Strategic Plans Division, strategic forces, scientists and engineers of strategic organisations.
- In February, Pakistan successfully test-fired a nuclear-capable surface-to-surface ballistic missile which can strike targets up to 290 kilometres.

Indian Navy Participate in French Naval Exercise in Bay of Bengal with QUAD member Countries

- India is to participate in France-led naval drill La Perouse for the first time in the Bay of Bengal.
- It will be held from April 5 to 7, 2021.

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- **Australia, Japan and the US** (the other Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) member countries) will also participate in La Perouse.
- This is the first time that the Indian Navy will be part of the France-led war game 'La Perouse'.
- **Until now, India was not invited for the French naval exercise.**
- After La Perouse, another important naval exercise, the **India-French Varuna exercise**, will also take place.
- This time, it will also include the **United Arab Emirates**
- It will take place in the **last week of April in the Western Indian Ocean.**

India conducts joint patrol in Madagascar EEZ

- **In the first, the navies of India and Madagascar conducted joint patrolling of Madagascar's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and also conducted a Passage Exercise (PASSEX).**
- It is the **first-ever joint patrol between the navies reflects the growing defence ties between the two Indian Ocean neighbours aimed at the common objective of ensuring maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**
- Indian Navy's INS Shardul and Malagasy Naval Ship Trozona undertook Joint Patrol of Madagascar's Exclusive Economic Zone and participated in PASSEX.
- The first ever Joint Patrol between the navies of India and Madagascar reflect the growing defence ties between the two Indian Ocean neighbours aimed at the common objective of ensuring maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region.
- A 4-member delegation led by Major General Léon Jean Richard RAKOTONIRINA, Minister of National Defence of Madagascar had visited India from February 3-5 to participate in the Aero India 2021 and IOR Defence Ministers Conclave at Bengaluru. Indian Naval Ship Shardul had arrived at port of Antsiranana, Madagascar on March 21 for Overseas Deployment of a training squadron headed by Captain Aftab Ahmed Khan.

About PASSEX :

- The exercise is **aimed at enhancing interoperability, improving understanding and imbibing best practices between both the friendly navies**, and would involve advanced surface and anti-submarine warfare exercises, weapon firings, seamanship exercises and helicopter operations.

Important Science and Technology

ISRO successfully launches Brazil's Amazonia 1 satellite, along with 18 other passenger satellites

- In the **Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO)** first mission of the year, the country's polar rocket successfully launched **Brazilian satellite Amazonia-1 and 18 other satellites from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Andhra Pradesh's Sriharikota.**
- The 18 co-passenger satellites placed in the orbit include four from ISRO's Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (three UNITY Sats from consortium of three Indian academic institutes and the SD-SAT from SKI) and 14 from NSIL.

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- After **four stages** of separation, the rocket launched Brazil's 637 kilogram Amazonia 1 satellite, its primary passenger.
- Amazonia-1 is the optical earth observation satellite of National Institute for Space Research (INPE).

Indigenously designed and developed Spectrograph, commissioned in Nainital

- The '**Made in India**' optical spectrograph named as Aries-Devasthal Faint Object Spectrograph & Camera (ADFOSC) is indigenously designed and developed by **Aryabhata Research Institute of observational sciences (ARIES)**, **Nainital**.

About the Spectrograph :

- The spectrograph is presently being used by **astronomers** from India and abroad to study distant quasars and galaxies in a very young universe, regions around supermassive black-holes around the galaxies, cosmic explosions like supernovae and highly energetic Gamma-ray bursts, young and massive stars, and faint dwarf galaxies.
- It is about **2.5 times less costly** compared to the imported ones and can locate sources of light with a photon-rate as low as about 1 photon per second.
- This low-cost optical spectrograph can locate sources of faint light from distant quasars and galaxies in a very young universe, regions around supermassive black-holes around the galaxies, and cosmic explosions. The total cost of this instrument is nearly Rs. 4 Crore.
- The spectrograph, the largest of its kind among the existing astronomical spectrographs in the country, has been successfully commissioned on the 3.6-m Devasthal Optical Telescope (DOT), the largest in the country and in Asia, near Nainital, Uttarakhand.

Russia and China agreed to build a International Lunar Scientific Research Station

- **China** and **Russia** will build a **lunar research station**, on the **moon's surface**, marking the start of a new era in space cooperation between the two countries.
- The **China National Space Administration** mentioned the **International Lunar Research Station** would also be open to use by other countries.
- It described the project as a comprehensive scientific experiment base with the capability of **long-term autonomous operation**.
- A memorandum of understanding on the project was signed by **Zhang Kejian**, administrator of the China National Space Administration, and Russian space agency Roscosmos chief **Dmitry Rogozin**.

Joint Earth Observation Satellite Mission Radar Developed by ISRO with NASA

- The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** has completed the development of a **radar** for the joint earth observation satellite mission with the US space agency **National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)**.
- This is a part of an agreement that was signed by NASA administrator **Charles Bolden** and the then ISRO chairman named **K Radhakrishnan** on **September 30, 2014**, in **Toronto, Canada**.
- NASA-ISRO SAR (NISAR) is a **joint collaboration for a dual-frequency L and S-band SAR for earth observation**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

- ISRO has developed a **Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR)**, capable of producing extremely high-resolution images for the mission.
- NISAR will be the **first satellite mission** to use **two different radar frequencies (L-band and S-band)** to measure changes in our planet's surface less than a centimeter across

ISRO Launches RH-560 To Study altitudinal variations

- On **March 12, 2021**, The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) launched a **sounding rocket (RH-560)** from **Andhra Pradesh's Sriharikota-based Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC)**.
- It is mainly for **studying the altitudinal variations in the neutral winds and plasma dynamics**.
- ISRO currently has **three** different versions of sounding rockets, namely **RH-200, RH-300-Mk-II and RH-560-Mk-II**
- The **three** different versions of sounding rockets are capable of carrying **8 to 100 kilogram** of payload to an altitude varying between **80 to 475 kilometres** from the ground.

Fugaku: Finally The fastest supercomputer in the world is at full operational status

- Researchers at **Japan's RIKEN institute** have announced **Fugaku is fully operational and ready to prove itself as the world's most powerful supercomputer**.
- Japan's **Research Organization for Information Science and Technology (RIST)** has already selected **74 research projects** that will be implemented from next month.
- **Aim** : making the device core of the computing infrastructure of Japan.

About Fugaku :

- Fugaku is a **key national technology**, and that will manage it responsibly with the goal to achieve research results that will help build a long-lived and healthy society, disaster mitigation, and better energy use,
- The ultimate goal to **establish the government's vision of an ultra-smart Society 5.0**
- Fugaku has topped the **Top500 list, a supercomputer benchmark index, for two consecutive years**.
- The computer has **100 times** the application performance of K supercomputer and is developed to implement high-resolution, long-duration and large-scale simulations.

HP Launched first ever PCs with plastic waste in ocean

- **HP** made its **first ever consumer PC using plastic waste in the ocean**, a move that builds on the company's sustainability commitment.
- Newly launched **Pavilion 13, Pavilion 14, and Pavilion 15 Laptops** were manufactured using **ocean-bound plastics**.
- HP estimates that the use of these plastics in devices will keep around **92,000 plastic bottles out of the oceans and landfills**.
- The outer boxes and fibre cushions used to pack the products and that also **100% recyclable material**.
- **HP Pavilion 15** with a screen size of **15"** will be available in **Silver, Ceramic White and Fog Blue colours**
- **HP Pavilion 13** will be available in **silver and ceramic white colour**
- **HP Pavilion 14** will be available in **silver, ceramic white and tranquil pink**

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Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

DoT launches 5G Online Certification Course

- The **Department of Telecommunications (DoT)** has launched a **new online certificate course on 5G technology**.
- To be conducted by the **National Telecommunications Institute for Policy Research, Innovation and Training (NTIPRIT)** which is the training institute of DoT.
- The course, which will be conducted from 9 March 2021 onwards, is 36 hours long and will be conducted over a period of **12 weeks**.

Objective :

- To build a team of master trainers, 5G security experts within the DoT would lay down a roadmap for reinforcing education and awareness levels about 5G technology and also identify lacunae in current legislations with the introduction of the next-gen fast broadband technology.
- Anshu Prakash, Secretary, DoT, Ministry of Communications and Chairman Digital Communications Commission unveiled the online course through video conference.

About DoT Online Certificate Course on 5G Technology :

- DoT hopes that this course would act as a capsule programme for learning overall 5G technology from the perspective of Policy Making.

Topics Covered Under the Course :

- Evolution from 1G to 5G.
- Introduction to 5G: Standardisation bodies, timelines and roadmaps, IMT 2020 vision and requirement, spectrum for 5G, new radio, architecture, deployment options, global launches, availability of 5G devices, and use cases.

Importance of 5G Technology :

- Potential of 5G to the full and making possibilities like Machine-to-Machine Communications, Internet of Things a reality.

Samsung sets up innovation lab at Delhi Technological University

- **Samsung Electronics** set up an **innovation lab at Delhi Technological University (DTU)** to promote joint research and training on domains such as artificial intelligence, machine learning and computer vision.
- It has set up the innovation lab under the Samsung Innovation Campus initiative as part of its new **#PoweringDigitalIndia** vision.
- Samsung now has **eight technical labs** spread across the country as part of its Samsung Innovation Campus initiative, which was earlier called Samsung Digital Academy.

About the Lab :

- The lab, engineers at **Samsung R&D Institute, Noida (SRI-N)** will work with students and faculty at DTU on collaborative research projects on smartphone domains.

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- The students and faculty at DTU will work on domains such as Application Framework, Multimedia, Health and Security, at the lab. Projects will focus on technology areas such as Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning and Computer Vision.
- Till now, over 200 students have worked with SRI-N engineers on research projects and have received training
- Collaborative research projects will be open to B.Tech, M.Tech and PhD students at DTU, who will receive certificates for their contribution at the end of each project.
- Samsung has so far set up seven Samsung innovation labs at IIT-Delhi, IIT-Kanpur, IIT-Hyderabad, IIT-Kharagpur, IIT-Roorkee, IIT-Guwahati and IIT-Jodhpur as part of its campus initiative.

KRAS rolls out first batch of MRSAM missile kits for Indian Army

- Kalyani Rafael Advanced Systems (KRAS) has rolled out its first batch of Medium Range Surface to Air Missile (MRSAM).
- It is for the Indian Army and the Air Force from its facility located near the Hyderabad international airport.
- DRDO is the custodian of the missile programme and Bharat Dynamics (BDL) the integrator.
- It was Designed by RAFAEL Advanced Defense System (100% Rafael design output and the indigenous content is not more than 30%.)
- It will supply through Rafael to BDL

ISRO Demonstrate - India's First Free-Space Quantum Communication Over 300 Metres

- For the first time in the country, The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has successfully demonstrated free-space Quantum Communication over a distance of 300 metres.
- The demonstration has included live video conferencing using quantum-key-encrypted signals.
- This is a major milestone achievement for unconditionally secured satellite data communication using quantum technologies.
- The free-space QKD was demonstrated at Space Applications Centre (SAC), Ahmedabad, between two line-of-sight buildings within the campus.
- The Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) technology underpins Quantum Communication technology that ensures unconditional data security by virtue of the principles of quantum mechanics, which is not possible with the conventional encryption systems.
- The experiment was performed at night, in order to ensure that there is no interference of the direct sunlight.
- The experiment is a major breakthrough towards ISRO's goal of demonstrating Satellite Based Quantum Communication (SBQC).
- Quantum communication technology will be useful for a variety of strategic sectors including defence and digital money transactions.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

Russia Launches 38 Satellites For 18 Countries into orbit

- On March 22, 2021, Russian space agency 'Roscosmos' successfully launched 38 foreign satellites into orbit, onboard Soyuz-2.1a carrier rocket from the Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.
- The rocket will place in orbit 38 satellites and it belongs to 18 countries, including South Korea, Japan, Canada, Saudi Arabia, Germany, Italy and Brazil.
- Among them is the **Challenge-1, the first satellite made completely in Tunisia**, which was created by the Telnet telecommunications group.
- In 2018, a Soyuz rocket carrying a Russian cosmonaut and a NASA astronaut failed mid-flight, forcing the crew to carry out an emergency landing. Both survived without injuries.

About Soyuz-2:

- It is the **carrier rocket consisting of the Fregat upper stage**.
- The 2.1a version of the Soyuz satellite comprises conversion from analog to digital flight control system and the updated engines on the booster

IIT Kharagpur team bagged CoreNet Global Academic Challenge 6.0

- A team of four undergraduate students from the **Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur (IIT-K)** has achieved historic win as they emerged as winners at the **CoreNet Global Academic Challenge 6.0**, sponsored by **Cushman and Wakefield, KI and IA: Interior Architects**.
- It is for the **first time** that a squad from India has emerged as winners in the **CoreNet Global Academic Challenge since the inception of the competition in 2015**.
- The members of the **team comprised** of Siddhant Samarth (3rd year, Department of Civil Engineering), Pratim Majumdar (3rd year, Department of Chemical Engineering), Rishita Raj (2nd year, Department of Mechanical Engineering) and Utkarsh Agrawal (3rd year, Department of Manufacturing Science and Engineering), and were guided by **Prof. Jenia Mukherjee (Department of Humanities and Social Sciences)**.
- The **IIT Kharagpur team** was one of the four teams to enter into the final round out of **1,300 teams from all over the world**.

Using blockchain technology ITI, Thalamus Irwine debut healthcare service

- **ITI Limited, India's telecom products manufacturing arm, and Thalamus Irwine**, a local startup have come together to **develop a technology for storing medical data on blockchain**.
- They conducted a **Proof of Concept (PoC)** with as many as **300 patients on March 25, 2021**.
- It also enabled the **Centre's ambitious One Nation One Health Card initiative**.
- One Nation One Health Card offers a level-playing field and consistency in health records would help to check future pandemics within a matter of minutes through a real-time scenario with **distributed ledger technology (DLT)**
- Both ITI and Thalamus would also conduct the next PoC at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport, and would jointly pitch for the prestigious One Nation One Health Card initiative once launched commercially.

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- India is one of the few countries to start a blockchain-based health data record system

Cochin Shipyard Ltd. delivers MV 'Sindhu', passengers cum Cargo Vessel for A&N

Island

- Cochin Shipyard Ltd. delivers MV 'Sindhu' A 500 pax passengers cum 150 MT Cargo Vessel built indigenously for Andaman and Nicobar Island.
- The Protocol signing & handing over ceremony was held on board the vessel at Cochin Shipyard On March 27, 2021.
- This project is a part of a series of Four Passenger vessels comprising 2 nos 500 Pax and 2 nos 1200 pax at a total order value of approx: 1400 crores under the “Make In India” initiative of the Government.
- The second 500 pax sister vessel is presently under advanced stage of construction and is also expected to join the fleet in the current year.
- The Protocol documents were signed by Capt. Ashutosh Pandey, Director of Shipping Services (DSS), representing A&N Administration and Shri Sivakumar A, General Manager (Ship Building for CSL in the presence of Shri Madhu S Nair, CMD CSL, Directors.
- The basic design of the vessel has been developed using world renowned Naval Architects Knud E Hansen of Denmark collaborating with M/s Smart Engineering and Design Solution, Kochi.
- This vessel which can cruise at 16 knots is built to the highest standards of the Indian Register of Shipping and American Bureau of Shipping meeting the Indian Merchant Shipping rules and is customized for Indian requirements with very high level of safety and comfort comparable to the international standards.

Important Environment News

Hemiandrus jacinda New insect Species named after New Zealand PM

- A newly discovered Hemiandrus jacinda cricket has been named after New Zealand's prime minister, Jacinda Ardern, making it the fourth insect to be named in her honour.
- Steven Trewick, the scientist named and formally described the insect.
- About Steven Trewick :
- Trewick, a professor in evolutionary ecology at Massey University in New Zealand
- Steven Trewick, the scientist named and formally described the insect, informed the name had struck him for reflecting traits of the prime minister

About Hemiandrus jacinda :

- The species of wētā, a giant and flightless cricket, native to the Oceanic country has been called Hemiandrus jacinda apparently.
- The cricket is red in colour and long-limbed, something which is similar to Ardern's Labour party colour and symbol.

About Jacinda Arden :

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- Jacinda Kate Laurell Ardern is a New Zealand politician and she has been serving as the **40th prime minister of New Zealand**
- She has been the leader of the Labour Party since 2017.
- First elected to the House of Representatives as a list MP in 2008
- She has also been the member of Parliament (MP) for Mount Albert since March 2017.

New plant species found in Chittoor, Andhra Pradesh- *Crotalaria lamelliformis*

- A team of botanists has recently stumbled upon a new **rattlepod species *Crotalaria lamelliformis*** in the Sadasivakona grove area of Chittoor district in Andhra Pradesh.
- The discovery has been published in the latest edition of the noted international journal 'Phytotaxa'.
- It was discovered after a critical investigation from **July 2018 to November 2020**.

About *Crotalaria lamelliformis* :

- The plant was also found in the nearby **Kailasakona and Pudi areas**.
- As the population and distributional range of the species is not clearly known, it has been assigned under 'data deficient' category following the **IUCN (International Code for Botanical Nomenclature) rules**
- The discovery of *Crotalaria lamelliformis* is an addition to the existing **116 species** from India.
- Diversity of *Crotalaria* species is mostly confined to the peninsular India region.

Team Members :

- **Dr. Sivaramakrishna**-Sri Venkateswara University
- **P. Yugandhar** - Sri Venkateswara University
- **Lalji Singh, Scientist-E from the Botanical Survey of India**, Andaman and Nicobar regional centre, came across the species growing in the pasture lands in Sadasivakona.

New species of diatoms *Epithemia agharkarii* found in Mula river

- The study led by researchers from **Pune-based Agharkar Research Institute (ARI)** named the new species found in the Mula river as *Epithemia agharkarii*, in honour of the institute's founder-director SP Agharka.
- The species was found thriving on submerged stones located downstream **Mulshi dam**, indicating its preferred ecosystem to be freshwater reserves.

About *Epithemia agharkarii* :

- **Diatoms** are **single-celled algae** that grow in nearly all kinds of water bodies including rivers, lakes, and streams.
- These microorganisms contribute in generating oxygen in the atmosphere.
- The microbes measured **16-38 micro metre in length and 12.5 to 17.5 micrometer in width**.
- Researchers from Savitribai Phule Pune University, Museum of Natural History and Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Colorado, USA and Harbin Normal University, China, who collaborated in this study have concluded that *Epithemia agharkarii* is endemic to the Northern Western Ghats region of our peninsular India.

As IUCN Red list African elephant recognised as Endangered & Critically Endangered

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- On March 25th, 2021, the African forest elephant is listed as Critically Endangered and the African savanna elephant as Endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.
- This is the **first time the two species** have been assessed separately for the IUCN Red List, following the emergence of new genetic evidence.
- The number of African forest elephants fell by more than 86% over a period of 31 years, while the population of African savanna elephants decreased by at least 60% over the last 50 years
- At Present Only 4,15,000 African Elephants are present.
- This is due to In 2008 both species suffered a sharp decline due to increases in poaching

About the 2 Elephant :

- African forest elephant - **Loxodonta cyclotis**
- This is slightly smaller than African savanna elephant, reaching around 2.5 metres tall and tipping the scales at up to four tonnes.
- Its diminutive size is thought to be an adaptation to living in the tropical rainforests that blanket much of the African continent's interior, where this species is predominantly found.
- African savanna elephant - **Loxodonta africana**
- The African savanna (or bush) elephant is the bigger species and is seen most often, as it moves through open grasslands across the plains and deserts of much of eastern and southern Africa.
- Reaching up to four metres tall and weighing over 10 tonnes, the savanna elephant is the largest living land animal.

New Bacteria *Methylobacterium ajmalii* Found on ISS Named After Indian Scientist Ajmal Khan

- The **new bacterial strains discovered from different locations** aboard the ISS .
- The researchers named the novel species as ***Methylobacterium ajmalii***, in honour of the renowned Indian biodiversity scientist, Dr Ajmal Khan, a former professor at Annamalai University in Tamil Nadu.
- The genome analysis of *Methylobacterium ajmalii* strains revealed the presence of genes that are involved in promoting plant growth.
- The bacterial strains belonging to the **family Methylobacteriaceae**.
- It was isolated from different locations aboard the ISS across two consecutive flights.
- The findings of the study were published in a **recent issue of the journal Frontiers in Microbiology**.

About the Research :

- The research teams were led by **Dr. Kasthuri Venkateswaran** of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, C.C. Wang of WorldQuant Initiative for Quantitative Prediction, Professor Appa Rao Podile from the University of Hyderabad (UoH) with expertise on plant growth-promoting bacteria and plant microbiome and Dr. Ramprasad, a CSIR-pool Scientist.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

Important Rankings and Indexes

Index	India's rank	Top	Presented By
Economic Freedom Index 2021	121	Singapore	Heritage Foundation
Global Home Price Index	56	Turkey	Knight Frank
Ultimate military strength index	61	China	Military Direct
International Intellectual Property (IP) Index	40	USA	US Chamber of Commerce Global Innovation Policy Centre

Hurun Global Rich List 2021: Mukesh Ambani 8th richest in world, Elon Musk at top

- Asia's richest person and Reliance Industries chairman Mukesh Ambani has been ranked eighth on the Hurun Global Rich List 2021.
- Mukesh Ambani's total wealth swelled to **\$83 billion (approximately Rs 6.09 lakh crore)** over the past one year.
- **Tesla** chief Elon Musk bagged the **top** spot on the list for the first time after adding a massive \$151 billion during the year to take his net worth to \$197 billion.
- **Amazon.com Inc boss Jeff Bezos ranked second** with \$189 billion in net worth.
- Bernard Arnault, chief executive of LVMH Moët Hennessey, the world's largest luxury-goods company, with a net worth of \$114 billion, Microsoft founder Bill Gates with \$110 billion and Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg with \$101 billion were among the top five billionaires.
- The report showed that despite COVID-19 pandemic, the world added 8 billionaires every week in 2020 and 421 in a year, taking their total number to a record 3,288.
- The total wealth of all billionaires across the globe surged 32 percent, an addition of \$3.5 trillion, to take their total wealth to \$14.7 trillion, during the period under review.
- The wealth calculations taken into account is as of January 15, 2021.

Ease of Living Index - Bengaluru and Shimla among 'Most liveable' cities across country

- **Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri** announced the release of the final rankings of **Ease of Living Index-2020** and the **Municipal Performance Index-2020** in New Delhi in an online event.
- The rankings under Ease of Living Index-2020 were announced for cities with a population of more than a million and cities with less than a million people.
- In all, 111 cities participated in the assessment exercise that was conducted last year.

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- Bengaluru emerged as the top performer in the Million Plus category, followed by Pune, Ahmedabad, Chennai, Surat, Navi Mumbai, Coimbatore, Vadodara, Indore and Greater Mumbai.
- In the Less than Million categories, Shimla was ranked the highest in ease of living, followed by Bhubaneswar, Silvassa, Kakinada, Salem, Vellore, Gandhinagar, Gurugram, Davangere and Tiruchirappalli.
- Similar to the Ease of Living Index index, the assessment framework under Municipal Performance Index-2020 has classified municipalities based on their population, Million plus and less than Million Population.

QS World University Rankings: 12 Indian Institutions on securing position in top 100

- Union Education Minister **Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'** has congratulated 12 Indian Institutions on securing a position in top 100 in the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2021.
- **These institutions are** IIT Bombay, IIT Delhi, IIT Madras, IIT Kharagpur, IISC Bangalore, IIT Guwahati, IIM Bangalore, IIM Ahmedabad, JNU, Anna University, University of Delhi, and O P Jindal University.
- IIT Madras has been ranked 30th in the world for Petroleum Engineering, IIT Bombay has been ranked 41st and IIT Kharagpur has been ranked 44th in the world for Minerals and Mining Engineering, and University of Delhi has been ranked 50th in the world for Development Studies.

India Inc's Business Confidence highest in decade: FICCI Survey

- **FICCI's Overall Business Confidence Index** has witnessed a decadal high of **74.2** in the current round on account of improvement in present conditions as well as expectations.
- The Index had stood at **70.9 in the previous survey and 59**
- It revealed recovery of demand conditions, improved capacity utilisation and a promising outlook on various operational parameters.
- Improved economic conditions and greater pricing power are likely to drive profits of corporate India over the next two quarters.
- The percentage of participants citing **higher profits over next six months increased to 36 per cent in the latest survey from 33 per cent respondents stating likewise in the previous round, the survey showed.**

Economic Freedom Index 2021: Singapore ranks First

- US conservative think-tank, the **Heritage Foundation** launched the **Economic Freedom Index 2021**.
- In the Economic Free index, **Singapore** has **topped** the global ranking for the **second consecutive year**.
- Singapore increased its overall score by 0.3 points to **89.7** primarily due to an improvement in the score for government spending.
- The Index has covered **184** countries in the study this time and the period of study is July 2019 to June 2020
- This is the first time the index has been published since the COVID-19 pandemic overturned lives as well as global economies and the scoring reflects to a small extent how governments have responded to the health crisis.

Ranking:

1. **Singapore** - 89.7 (Increased 0.3 Points)

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

2. **New Zealand** - 83.9 (Decreased 0.2 Points)
3. **Australia** - 82.4 (Decreased 0.2 Points)
4. **Switzerland** - 81.9 (Decreased 0.1 Point)
5. **Ireland** - 81.4 (Increased 0.5 Points)

India's Position in the Index:

India has been placed at **121 position** in the index, with a score of **56.5** out of 100.

The Indian economy remains in the mid-range of the mostly unfree category.

In the 2021 Index, India came in around the middle of the pack among Asia-Pacific countries ranking 26th out of 40 countries.

Globally, the Foundation rates India's economy as the 121st freest.

About Economic Freedom Index:

- The Heritage Foundation's Index of Economic Freedom is an **annual guide** published to **measure the progress made in advancing economic freedom which it claims brings greater prosperity**.
- The Foundation also believes that the **ideals of economic freedom are strongly associated with healthier societies, cleaner environments, greater per capita wealth, human development, democracy, and poverty elimination**.
- The index ranks **12 indicators** from property rights to financial freedom under **four** categories:
 1. rule of law
 2. size of government,
 3. regulatory efficiency
 4. open markets.

2020 World Air Quality Report - New Delhi Ranked as World's most polluted capital city

- **New Delhi** was the **world's most polluted capital for the third straight year in 2020, according to IQAir**.
- A **Swiss group** that measures air quality levels based on the concentration of lung-damaging airborne particles known as **PM2.5**.
- The study is based on India's annual average of particulate matter PM2.5, **airborne particles with less than 2.5 microns in diameter**.
- **Globally, New Delhi is ranked as the 10th most polluted city** in the world.
- The topmost polluted city is Xinjiang in China followed by nine Indian cities.
- **Ghaziabad** is the **second most polluted city** in the world followed by **Bulandshahar, Birsakh Jalalpur, Noida, Greater Noida, Kanpur, Lucknow and Bhiwari**.
- The global cities ranking report is based on PM2.5 data from **106 countries**, which is measured by ground-based monitoring stations, most of which is operated by government agencies.
- Notably, India was home to 35 of the world's 50 most polluted cities in 2020, according to IQAir's 2020 World Air Quality Report.

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- The IQAir report seeks to empower individuals, organizations and communities to breathe cleaner air through information, collaboration and technology solutions.

SIRPI REPORT - India's arms imports down by 33%

- India's arms imports fell 33 % between the 2011-15 and 2016-20 report released by the Sweden-based think-tank Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).
- However, despite a cut in import rates, India continues to be the **second largest importer in the world during 2016-2020**.
- During 2016-20 were **Russia**, accounted for **49% of total imports**, followed by **France 18%**, and **Israel 13%**.
- India's import accounted for 9.5 percent of all arms sales during 2016-2020, compared to 14 percent in the previous five year block (2011-2015).

Largest Importers :

- The five largest arms importers in 2016-20
1. Saudi Arabia
 2. India
 3. Egypt
 4. Australia
 5. China.

Largest Exporters :

- The five largest arms exporters in 2016–20
1. United States
 2. Russia
 3. France
 4. Germany
 5. China.
- In that India ranked at 24th position among arms exporters.

Global Home Price Index Q4 2020 : Turkey Tops & India Placed Last at 56th Rank

- India has gone **down 13 spots to rank at 56th place** in the latest global home price index 2020 released by property consultant Knight Frank.
- India reported a **decline of 3.6 percent year-on-year (YoY) in home prices**, to finish last in the fourth and last quarter ending December 2020.
- In **Q4 2019 It ranked 43rd in the same quarter**.
- **Turkey** was the **leading country** in the global ranking with home prices up by 30.3 percent year-on-year.
- Followed by New Zealand at 18.6% YoY and Slovakia at 16.0% YoY.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

- India was the weakest-performing country in Q4 2020, with a decline of 3.6% YoY in home prices, followed by Morocco with a drop of 3.3% YoY.

About Global Home Price Index :

- The Global House Price Index **tracks the movement in mainstream residential prices across 56 countries and territories** worldwide using official statistics.
- The mainstream residential prices across 56 countries and territories worldwide rose at an annual rate change of 5.6% on average in 2020, compared to 5.3% in 2019.

In strongest armed forces India Ranks Fourth & China Tops ; Military Direct Study

- China** has the **strongest military force** in the world while **India** stands at number **four**, according to a study titled “ultimate military strength index” released by defence website Military Direct.
- China has the **strongest military in the world, scoring 82 out of 100 points in the index.**

Top 5 Countries In the ultimate military strength index :

Rank	Score	Country
1	82	China
2	74	USA
3	69	Russia
4	61	India
5	58	France

- The world's biggest military spender with a budget of \$732 billion per year is the USA, it noted, adding that China comes second with \$261 billion, followed by India at \$71 billion.

About ultimate military strength index :

- The **USA**, despite their enormous military budgets, comes in **2nd place with 74 points**, followed by **Russia with 69, India at 61 and then France with 58.**

GIPC : India Ranks 40th On International Intellectual Property Index

- India ranked 40 among 53 global economies** on the latest annual edition of the **International Intellectual Property (IP) Index.**
- India ranked **40th in 2020 also**, scoring 38.4 out of 100 on a set of 50 intellectual property-related indicators.
- The United States, Japan and Europe remained at the top of the global intellectual property rankings 2021**, while emerging markets such as the UAE, China and Mexico continued to improve their scores.

About the Index :

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- The annual IP Index 2021 was released on March 23, 2021 by the US Chamber of Commerce Global Innovation Policy Centre (GIPC).
- The Index evaluates Intellectual Property rights in 53 global economies based on 50 intellectual property-related indicators, grouped in 9 categories.
- This is the ninth IP index released by the GIPC.
- In that Categories include: Patent, Copyrights, Trademarks, Design Rights, Trade Secrets and Market Access, Commercialization of IP Assets, Enforcement, Systematic Efficiency, and International Treaties.
- The 2021 Index showed improvement in the overall global IP environment despite the pandemic. The report also underscored the importance that strong IP economies have played in combating COVID-19.

World Bank announces “World Development Report 2021: Data for Better Lives”

- The “World Development Report 2021: Data for Better Lives” was released by the World Bank on March 24, 2021.
- The World Development Report focuses on how data can improve the lives of poor people and advance development objectives, to ensure no one is left behind.
- It highlights the tremendous potential of the changing data landscape to improve the lives of poor people, at the same time acknowledging its potential to open back doors that can harm individuals, businesses, and societies.
- Through this report, the World Bank aims to support its client countries by identifying where public and private sector investments are the most critical, defining a rich program for policy reform and technical assistance, and highlighting areas in which global initiatives can help to convene and facilitate cross-border cooperation.

2020 was Best Year for Wind Industry: Report released by Global Wind Report 2021

- Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the year 2020 was the best year in history for the global wind industry as this sector installed 93GW of new capacity in 2020, according to a new report titled ‘Global Wind Report 2021, released by the Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC- Headquarters location: Brussels, Belgium).
- This is the 16th annual flagship report, released by GWEC on March 25, 2021.
- The 93GW represents a 53% year-on-year increase.

Key Takeaways of the report

- As per the report, the global wind power market increased four times in size over the past decade but the record growth was seen in 2020.
- This increase was driven by a surge of installations in China and the US alone
- Together, the US and China installed 75% of new installations in 2020 and account for over half of the world’s total wind power capacity.
- In current scenario, 743GW of wind power capacity has been installed worldwide, which is helping to avoid over 1.1 billion tonnes of CO2 annually.
- However GWEC’s report shows that the current rate of wind power installed will not be enough to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

- The world needs to install a minimum of **180 GW of new wind energy every single year** to limit global warming to well below **2°C above pre-industrial levels**.
- Similarly, it will need to increase the capacity to **280GW annually** to meet net **zero emission targets by 2050**.

Important Schemes

Government forms experts committee for Startup India Seed Fund Scheme

- The **government** has constituted an experts advisory committee for the overall execution and monitoring of the **Startup India Seed Fund Scheme**.
- The committee would be **chaired by H K Mittal from the Department of Science and Technology**.
- **About the Committee :**
- The committee will **evaluate and select incubators for allotment of funds under the scheme**, monitor progress and take all necessary measures for efficient utilisation of funds towards fulfilment of objectives of the scheme.
- The other representatives would include members from DPIIT, department of biotechnology, science and technology, electronics and IT, Niti Aayog, and expert members from the startup ecosystem.

About SISFS :

- **Startup India Seed Fund Scheme (SISFS)** has been approved for the period of **next four years starting from 2021-22**.
- It will be implemented with effect from **April 1, 2021**.
- **Rs 945 crore corpus** will be divided over the next four years for providing seed funding to eligible startups through eligible incubators across India.
- The scheme is expected to support about **3,600 startups**.

New Nagar Van Scheme to develop Urban forests in cities: Environment Minister

- **Union Environment and Information & Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar** has said that the new Nagar Van Scheme will help in creation of Urban forests in the cities.
- Mr. Javadekar noted, the **scheme** will also fill the gap between the cities and villages in terms of having their own forest cover.
- He cited India's age old tradition of developing and caring for village forests in the vicinity of almost every rural patch.
- Under the Nagar Van Scheme, Urban forests will be developed in **200 cities** in its first phase.
- The **United Nations General Assembly** proclaimed 21st March as the **International Day of Forests in 2012**.
- The Day celebrates and raises awareness of the importance of **all types of forests**.

About Nagar Van scheme:

- On the occasion of World Environment Day, the government announced implementation of the Nagar van scheme to develop **200 Urban Forests across the country in next five years** with a renewed focus on people's participation and collaboration between the Forest **Department, Municipal bodies, NGOs, Corporates and local citizens**.
- World Environment Day (WED) is celebrated on **5th June** every year.

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- The Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change celebrates WED focusing on the theme declared by the United Nation's Environment Programme (UNEP) and organizes several events.
- **This year's theme is 'Biodiversity'.**

Govt. launches 'Gram Ujala Scheme' to offer LED bulbs in rural areas

- The **Government of India** has launched an ambitious scheme called "**Gram Ujala**" under which high quality energy efficient LED bulbs will be given for just Rs 10 per piece in rural areas.
- This scheme is in line with the government's climate change strategy and further strengthening its self-reliance credentials.
- The **Gram Ujala programme** was launched by **Power & New and Renewable Energy Minister R K Singh** in Bihar.
- The scheme will be implemented in phased manner. In the first phase, 15 million LED bulbs will be distributed across certain villages of 5 states.
- These include: Arrah (Bihar), Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh), Vijaywada (Andhra Pradesh), Nagpur (Maharashtra), and western Gujarat.

Important Books and Authors

Authors/ Released by	Books
Anindya Dutta (Publisher: Westland Sport)	Advantage India: The Story of Indian Tennis
Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan(Freedom Fighter) (It was first published in Iranian language Pashto in 1983)	The Frontier Gandhi: My Life and Struggle Published by Roli Book
Journalist-author Anant Vijay.	Dynasty to Democracy: The Untold Story of Smriti Irani's Triumph The book is the English translation of "Amethi Sangram: Aitihasic Jeet Ankahi Dastan"
Ranjit Hoskote (Sahitya Akademi Golden Jubilee Award, the Sahitya Akademi Translation Award and the S.H. Raza Literature Award)	Hunchprose (8th poetry collection)
A.S. Panneerselvan	Karunanidhi: A Life (Published by Penguin Viking) (It is the second biography)
Susmita Mukherjee (ITA Award)	Baanjh: Incomplete Lives of Complete Women (a

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for Best Actress in a Supporting Role, STAR Parivaar)	collection of 11 short stories)
Swati Pandey & Orchida Mukherjee	Dawn Under The Dome (Released by Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari)
Published by Indra Nooyi	My Life in Full: Work, Family and Our Future
Dr. M. Ramachandran, IAS (Launched by Venkaiah Naidu)	Bringing Governments And People Closer
Actor Samir Soni (published by OM Books International in 2021)	My Experiments With Silence
Namit Arora (Published by India Viking)	Indians: A Brief History of A Civilization (The Book Covers Feature of 5 Chapters on travellers like Megasthenes, Faxian, Xuanzang, Yijing, Alberuni (al-Biruni), Marco Polo & François Bernier. On Six Places: Dholavira, Nagarjunakonda, Nalanda, Khajuraho, Hampi & Varanasi
Daribha lyndem (Writer and civil servant from Shillong)	NAME PLACE ANIMAL THING (Published by Zubaan Publishers Private Limited)

Important Peoples' in News

Yusuf Pathan Announces Retirement From All Forms Of Cricket

- **Yusuf Pathan**, former India all-rounder, **announced his retirement from all formats of cricket.**
- Yusuf, the older brother of another former India cricketer Irfan Pathan, is a **two-time World Cup winner.**
- Yusuf has also **won the Indian Premier League twice with Kolkata Knight Riders – in 2012, 2014 – and once with Rajasthan Royals in 2008.**
- Yusuf played 57 ODIs and 22 T20Is for India since making his international debut in 2007.
- He was part of the Indian team that won the ICC T20 World Cup 2007 and ICC Cricket World Cup 2011.
- Yusuf played 100 first-class matches, scoring 4825 runs and picking up 201 wickets. In List A cricket, the right-handed batsman accumulated 4797 runs and got 124 wickets from 199 matches.

Pacer Vinay Kumar announces retirement from all forms of cricket

- **Pacer Vinay Kumar** announced his **retirement from all forms of cricket.**
- "Davangere Express" after running for 25 years and passing so many stations of cricketing life, has finally arrived at a station called "retirement".
- An intelligent pacer and a capable batsman, Vinay played one Test (against Australia in Perth in 2012), **31 ODIs and nine T20Is.**

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- The 37-year-old last featured for India in the limited-overs leg of a home series against Australia in 2013.
- Vinay was an outstanding performer in his 17-year domestic career.
- He **scalped 504 wickets in 139 first-class matches** and is the highest wicket-taker among fast bowlers in Ranji Trophy history.
- He also has 225 and 194 wickets in List A and T20 matches respectively. With the bat, he scored two centuries and 17 fifties in first-class matches.
- Vinay made his Ranji Trophy debut for Karnataka in the 2004-05 season and quickly rose through the ranks to become their lead seamer.
- The 2007-08 season marked his arrival as he finished as the second leading wicket-taker in the Ranji Trophy season - a performance that ensured a call-up to the IPL where he represented Royal Challengers Bangalore.
- It soon got better as the 2009-10 Ranji Trophy season saw him take 46 wickets and lead his Karnataka side to the final.

Kohli becomes first cricketer to have 100 million followers on Instagram

- India captain **Virat Kohli** has recorded another century, albeit not on the pitch this time, as he became the **first cricketer** in the world to have **100 million followers** on social media platform **Instagram**.
- The 32-year-old Kohli is also the first person in the Asia-Pacific region to achieve the feat.
- Kohli is also the **fourth most followed sportsperson on Instagram**.
- Portugal football star **Cristiano Ronaldo tops the chart with 265 million followers**, ahead of Argentina football captain and FC Barcelona legend Lionel Messi and Brazil's Neymar, who are second and third in the list with 186 million and 147 million followers respectively.
- The others in the 100 million club are Hollywood actor and former pro-wrestler Dwayne (The Rock) Johnson, American singer-songwriter Beyonce, and Ariana Grande. Kohli, regarded as the one of the best batsmen in the world, has 27 centuries in Test matches and 43 tons in ODI cricket.
- For over two years now, Kohli has been the most followed person on Instagram in India.

WEF honours Deepika Padukone - 2021 Young Global Leaders List

- **Bollywood actor Deepika Padukone** has joined the Forum of the Young Global Leaders (YGLs) for the year 2021 compiled by the **World Economic Forum**.
- The 2021 class of the list comprises of **112 world's most promising leaders** of under the age of 40, who are involved in activities ranging from advocating for public healthcare to campaigning for inclusivity in medical research.

About the honour:

- The **Young Global Leaders** was founded in 2005 by Klaus Schwab, founder and executive chairman of the WEF.
- Its main objective is to create a world where leaders take responsibility for a sustainable future while meeting increasingly complex and interrelated challenges.
- Currently, there are 1,400 members and alumni from over 120 countries.

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Mithali Raj Becomes 1st Indian Women Cricketer To Score 10,000 Int Runs

- On March 12, 2021, Mithali Raj became the first Indian woman to score 10000 runs in international cricket across all formats.
- The 38-year-old Mithali, leads the Indian ODI team, joined England's Charlotte Edwards in the elite club.
- She achieved the feat with a boundary off Anne Bosch in the 28th over of India's innings during the ongoing third ODI against South Africa.

About Mithali Raj :

- Mithali Raj is the highest run-scorer in women's international cricket and the only female cricketer to surpass the 6,000 run mark in Women's One Day International matches
- In June 2018 during the 2018 Women's Twenty20 Asia Cup, she became the first player from India (either male or female) to score 2000 runs in T20Is, and also became the first woman cricketer to reach 2002 WT20I runs.
- In 2019, she became the first woman to complete 20 years in international cricket
- She also became the second woman cricketer at the international level to complete 10000 runs.
- She is the recipient of several national and international awards, including the Wisden Leading Woman Cricketer in the World in 2017, Arjuna Award in 2003, and the Padma Shri in 2015, both by the Government of India.

UAE's Mohammad Naveed, Shaiman Anwar banned from all crickets for 8 years

- The International Cricket Council (ICC) has imposed an eight years ban on former UAE Cricketers Mohammad Naveed and Shaiman Anwar from all cricket, for trying to fix matches during the T20 World Cup qualifiers in 2019.
- This mainly for its Anti-Corruption Tribunal body found them guilty of breaching the corruption code in January of 2021.
- The bans are effective from 16 October 2019.

About the Cricketers :

- Naveed was the captain and leading wicket-taker.
- Anwar was the opening bat.
- Both had long international careers and were well versed in the threat from match-fixers.
- Both have been charged with two breaches each, the first of which is Article 2.2.1, which stands for 'contriving, or being party to an agreement or effort to fix or contrive or otherwise influence improperly, the result, progress, conduct or any other aspect of matches in the upcoming ICC World T20 Qualifiers 2019.'

Former Ireland Skipper Gary Wilson announces retirement from international cricket

- On March 19, 2021, Former Ireland skipper Gary Wilson announced his retirement from professional cricket.
- He will take up the new full-time role as head coach and pathway manager for North West Warriors.

About Gary Wilson :

- The 35-year-old made his international debut for Ireland in June 2005 against the MCC and appeared 292 times.

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- He finishes as Ireland's second-most successful wicket-keeper in terms of dismissals behind the stumps with 160 catches and 33 stumpings.
- He scored 5,959 runs for Ireland, hitting one century and 30 fifties, his highest score being 113 coming against the Netherlands in 2010.
- He was named T20 captain for Ireland in 2018.

Prithvi Shaw becomes first player to score 800 runs in single edition

- Mumbai captain Prithvi Shaw became the first player to breach the 800-run mark in a single edition of the Vijay Hazare Trophy.
- Shaw achieved the feat during his 73-run knock against Uttar Pradesh in the ongoing final of Vijay Hazare Trophy at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in Delhi.
- Prithvi Shaw became the first player to score 800 runs in a single edition.
- Mayank Agarwal's record of 723 runs in the 2017-18 edition.
- Kaushik's unbeaten 158-run knock is the highest individual score of any batsman in the finals of the Vijay Hazare Trophy.
- Shaw broke Mahendra Singh Dhoni and Virat Kohli's record of the highest individual score by an Indian batsman in a List A chase.
- Shaw scored a century while playing for Mumbai in the second semi-final against Karnataka, at the Palam A Stadium.

Thisara Perera Becomes First Sri Lankan To Hit Six Sixes In An Over

- On March 28, 2021, All-rounder Thisara Perera became the first Sri Lankan to hit six sixes from one over.
- The 31-year-old achieved the feat during his unbeaten 13-ball 52 while captaining Sri Lanka Army in a group match against Bloomfield Cricket and Athletic Club.
- It was also the second-fastest half-century by a Sri Lankan in List A cricket, after former Sri Lanka all-rounder Kaushalya Weeraratne's 12-ball half-century for Ragana Cricket Club against Kurunegala Youth Cricket Club in November 2005.
- Perera is the ninth cricketer in the world to have achieved this feat in professional cricket, after Garfield Sobers, Ravi Shastri, Herschelle Gibbs, Yuvraj Singh, Ross Whiteley, Hazratullah Zazai, Leo Carter and recently Kieron Pollard.
- Perera has played six Tests, 166 ODIs and 64 T20 Internationals.

Important Mergers and Acquisitions

HDFC Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank to pick up 9.99% stake each in Ferbine

- Private lenders HDFC Bank and Kotak Mahindra Bank have initiated exchanges that they have invested in Ferbine Private Limited.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

- In its regulatory filing, HDFC Bank said that the bank has executed an agreement for subscribing to **4,995 equity shares** of the face value of Rs. 10 each fully paid up issued by Ferbine Private Limited for a consideration of Rs. 10 per equity share.
- **HDFC Bank will hold about 9.99% stake in Ferbine.**
- Meanwhile, Kotak Bank said that the bank has agreed to subscribe to 4,995 Equity Shares in Ferbine Private Limited for a consideration of Rs. 49,950 translating into an equity shareholding of 9.99%. The deal was completed.
- Ferbine has been incorporated to make an application to the Reserve Bank of India ('RBI') for setting up a pan-India Umbrella Entity ('PUE') for retail payments.

Bharat Petroleum Corporation Board approves sale of its 61.65 % stake

- Bharat Petroleum Corporation Board has approved sale of its 61.65 percent stake in Numaligarh Refinery for **9,875 crore rupees**.
- **Oil India Limited, Engineers India Ltd and Assam Government** will be picking up the stake.
- Government has also received Multiple Expressions of Interest for privatisation of Shipping Corporation of India Limited.
- The transaction will now move to the second stage.

Indian Bank to divest stake in asset reconstruction JV ASREC India

- State-owned **Indian Bank** will divest stake in joint venture entity **ASREC (India) Ltd** as part of **asset monetisation exercise**.
- The bank holds a **38.26 percent stake in ASREC (India) Ltd**.
- The monetisation of the bank's non-core assets, the board of directors of the bank in its meeting held on March 5, 2021

About ASREC :

- ASREC is an **asset reconstruction company** in which Bank of India, Union Bank of India, LIC and Deutsche Bank are the shareholders.
- The company was granted a certificate of registration by the Reserve Bank of India in October 2004 to carry out activities under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act 2002.
- ASREC acquires **non-performing assets (NPAs)** from the banks/financial institutions at mutually agreed prices with the objective to maximise the returns through innovative resolution strategies.

Govt to sell 16.12% stake in Tata Communications Ltd via OFS

- Government has decided to sell 16.12 per cent stake in **Tata Communications Limited TCL** through an **Offer for Sale, OFS**.
- The floor price of each share of face value of ten rupees is fixed at one thousand one hundred 61 rupees.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

- **Secretary Department of Investment and Public Asset Management DIPAM Tuhin Kanta Pandey** mentioned, on the first day the sale is open to non-retail investors and retail investors can participate in the bid.
- Government holds **26.12 per cent stake** in TCL earlier known as Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited.
- As per the decision of Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, the remaining stake of Government in TCL post OFS, including the unsubscribed portion of the OFS would be sold to Panatone Finvest Limited, a Tata group company at the price discovered in OFS.
- The whole transaction is likely to raise **more than 8 thousand 6 hundred 42 crore rupees** for the Government.

Tech Mahindra Planned to buy 70% stake in Perigord Asset Holdings

- **Tech Mahindra** will acquire a **70 percent stake** in Ireland-based **Perigord Asset Holdings Ltd** for around **Rs 182 crore** and plans to buy the remaining 30 per cent shareholding over a period of four years.
- **About the acquisition :**
- The acquisition will help in **augmenting its expertise in the global pharmaceutical, healthcare and life science sectors.**
- The acquisition is a part of Tech Mahindra's long-term growth plan to build presence across key markets in Ireland, Germany, USA, and India with enhanced global delivery.

About Perigord Asset Holdings Ltd :

- Perigord's proprietary **platform and expertise in the artwork space and life sciences industry will add significant value to our offerings and capabilities.**

Adani Ports acquires 31.5% stake in Gangavaram Port for Rs 1,954 cr

- **Adani Ports and Special Economic Zones (APSEZ)** is acquiring the **31.5 percent stake** held by Windy Lakeside Investment Limited (an affiliate of Warburg Pincus) in **Gangavaram Port Limited (GPL)** for around **Rs 1,954 crore.**
- The latest acquisition expands its **market share to 30 percent across 12 locations in India.**
- Adani Ports is also in discussions with DVS Raju and Family for their 58.1 per cent stake in GPL.

About GPL:

- GPL is an all weather, deep water, multi-purpose port capable of handling fully laden super cape size vessels of upto **200,000 DWT.**
- Now, it operates **9 berths** and has free hold land of 1,800 acres.
- With a master plan capacity for 250 MMTPA with 31 berths, GPL has sufficient headroom to support future growth
- The acquisition is subject to regulatory approvals.
- **GPL is located in the northern part of Andhra Pradesh next to Vizag Port.**
- It is the **second largest non major port in Andhra Pradesh with a 64 MMT capacity** established under concession from Government of Andhra Pradesh (GoAP) that extends till 2059.
- It has a paid up equity share capital of 51.7 Cr shares of which 58.1 percent is owned by DVS Raju and Family (Promoter), 10.4 per cent by Andhra Pradesh government and 31.5 per cent by Warburg Pincus.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

- It handles a diverse mix of dry and bulk commodities including Coal, Iron Ore, Fertilizer, Limestone, Bauxite, Sugar, Alumina, and Steel. It is the gateway port for a hinterland spread over 8 states across eastern, western, southern and central India.

Power Grid acquired balance 74% stake in JV Jaypee PowerGrid

- **Power Grid Corporation of India** signed a share purchase agreement with **Jaiprakash Power Ventures (JPVL)** for acquisition of **74% stake of JPVL in Jaypee PowerGrid** at an aggregate consideration of **Rs 351.64 crore**.
- The board of Power Grid Corporation of India had approved the acquisition on February 11, 2021.
- JPL-JV has developed a **214 km long EHV power transmission project** to evacuate power from **Karcham-Wangtoo project in Himachal Pradesh**.
- The power transmitted is meant for distribution and consumption in states of Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan.

CCI Approves Tata Power's 51 PerCent Stake Acquisition

- The **Competition Commission of India (CCI)** approved the acquisition of **51 percent stake in Odisha power utility NESCO** from **Grid Corporation of Odisha (GRIDCO)**.
- The 51 per cent of the equity share capital of **North Eastern Electricity Supply Company of Odisha** by **Tata Power Company Ltd** from **Grid Corporation of Odisha Ltd** under **Section 31(1) of the Competition Act, 2002**.
- The equity share capital of NESCO Utility by the TPCL from GRIDCO pursuant to the competitive bidding process initiated by the **Odisha Electricity Regulatory Commission (OERC)** under Section 20 of the Electricity Act, 2003

About NESCO :

- **NESCO Utility**, incorporated on **November 19, 1997**, is engaged in the business of distribution and retail supply of power in **five districts of Odisha** namely **Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Keonjhar and Baripada**.

Government exits from TCL, nets Rs 8,846 crore

- **On March 22, 2021**, The government has fully exited **Tata Communications Ltd** by selling its **26.12% stake** and has **netted Rs 8,846 crore** in the process, the **department of investment and public asset management (DIPAM)**.
- Disinvestment of government holding completed of **16.12% in TCL** through **OFS** at **Rs 5,457 crore** and **10% to strategic partner** at **OFS** discovered price for **Rs 3,389 crore**.
- Public sector company **VSNL** was **privatised in 2002** by **disinvesting 25 percent** shareholding along with transfer of management control to **Panatone Finvest Ltd**, the strategic partner. Subsequent to the strategic disinvestment, the name of the company was renamed to **TCL**.
- The revised disinvestment target for this financial year has been set at **Rs 32,000 crore**, substantially lower than the budgeted **Rs 2.10 lakh crore**.

Indian Government to sell 15% stake in Rail Vikas Nigam Limited

- The **Indian Government** has announced it will **sell a 15% stake in Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL)** to raise nearly **\$103m (Rs7.5bn)**.

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Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

- Out of 15% the government would divest 10% equity with a 5% Green Shoe option.

About RVNL :

- RVNL was established as a 100 per cent owned PSU of the Ministry of Railways in January 2003

Objective:

- Raising extra-budgetary resources and implementation of projects relating to creation and augmentation of capacity of rail infrastructure on a fast track basis.
- RVNL was incorporated for raising extra-budgetary resources and has also executed several projects on a fast-track basis in connection with the formation and capacity expansion of rail infrastructure.
- Last month, RVNL successfully conducted the trial run of an electric locomotive for the very first time in the northeastern state of Assam.
- As per RVNL's shareholding pattern, the government held 87.84 per cent stake in the company at the end of December 2020 quarter.

EIYP acquires 74% stake in Engie's solar assets in India

- Edelweiss Infrastructure Yield Plus (EIYP), an alternative investment fund by Edelweiss Alternative Asset Advisors, acquired 74 per cent stake in French energy major, Engie Group's, solar portfolio in India.
- The Engie Group has 813 MW of operational solar assets in the country, and it plans to add up to 2 GW more over next couple of years, which once commissioned will be acquired by the EIYP
- This partnership between EIYP and Engie is aimed at creating a high-quality solar platform of substantial scale with a plan to add 2 GW solar assets over the next couple of years.
- These assets will be developed by Engie and acquired by EIYP post-commissioning under the agreed term.
- With an AUM of over Rs 30,500 crore, the EAAA provides long-term growth capital to companies and projects.
- This investment is in line with EIYP's strategy to generate regular yields and create value for its investors by taking controlling stake in quality operating infrastructure assets with strong cash flows, the fund said.

Indian Bank to divest stake in JV ASREC India for asset reconstruction

- State-owned Indian Bank will divest stake in joint venture entity ASREC (India) Ltd as part of asset monetisation exercise.
- The bank holds a 38.26 per cent stake in ASREC (India) Ltd.
- As part of the monetization of the bank's non-core assets, the board of directors of the bank in its meeting held on March 5, 2021, accorded in-principle approval for partial/full divestment of the bank's stake in joint venture ASREC (India) Ltd, Indian Bank said in a regulatory filing.
- ASREC is an asset Reconstruction Company in which Bank of India, Union Bank of India, LIC and Deutsche Bank are the shareholders.

Revision Points

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Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

Company	Merging Company
HDFC Bank and Kotak Mahindra Bank	Ferbine Private Limited (9.99% each)
Oil India Limited, Engineers India Ltd and Assam Government from Bharat Petroleum Corporation	Numaligarh Refinery (61.65%)
Indian Bank	ASREC (India) Ltd (38.26%)
Tech Mahindra	Perigord Asset Holdings Ltd (70%)
Adani Ports and Special Economic Zones	Gangavaram Port Limited (31.5%)
Power Grid Corporation of India	Jaypee PowerGrid (74%)
Edelweiss Infrastructure Yield Plus	Engie Group's, solar portfolio (74%)

Important Web Portals and Mobile Apps

Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik launches 5 online services of WCD, Mission Shakti Dept

- **Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik** launched **5 online services of the Women and Child Development Department and Mission Shakti**.
- The initiatives launched are **'Mo-Chhatua App'** for streamlining supply chain management of Take Home Ration (Chhatua)
- **e-Kalika**, an application for monitoring crèches for children under three;
- **'Mo Sishu portal'**, a comprehensive web based information management and monitoring system exclusively for child protection services;
- **'MAMATA App & MIS'**, making the flagship conditional cash transfer benefit scheme for pregnant women hassle free, paperless and citizen centric.
- The **'e-manadeya'** portal launched is for seamless, paperless transfer of honorarium to 1, 34,758 AWWs, mini anganwadi workers and helpers.
- On this occasion **WCD** Department also entered into technical collaboration with **CFTRI (Central Food Technological Research Institute)** for improving the quality of THR (Take Home Ration) including testing of samples of THR and hot cooked meals, mentoring THR producing women self help groups and capacity building of ICDS functionaries and women SHG.
- Also an understanding has been entered into with **ICMR- RMRC (Indian Council of Medical Research – Regional Medical Research Centre)** to conduct an annual nutrition survey.
- The **WCD & MS** Department also entered into a technical collaboration with **UNICEF** on capacity building of the Odisha State Child Protection Society to strengthen the capacities of the statutory bodies, service delivery structures and caregivers under the State Child Protection Scheme and with the World Food Programme for technical support for fortification.

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Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

Gujarat govt launched its Budget mobile app

- In Gujarat, **Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel** launched '**Gujarat Budget**' mobile application at Gandhinagar.
- Briefing media at Gandhinagar, Mr Patel said the mobile app will have five different sections, comprising budgetary allocations for **27 departments**, budget highlights, finance minister's speech, and important aspects of the budget and news coverage of it.
- He added that since budget publications will be available online, the government will print only **20 percent of material, which would save 55 lakh pages**.
- The month-long budget session of the Gujarat Assembly would begin on March 1st and the budget for the financial year 2021-22 will be presented on March 3rd.

E-Daakhil portal for consumer grievance redressal now operational in 15 states, UTs

- The '**E-Daakhil**' portal for consumer grievance redressal is now operational in **15 states and Union Territories (UTs)**.
- The Consumer Protection Act, 2019, which came into force from July 20, 2020, has a provision for e-filing of consumer complaints in the consumer commissions and online payment of the fees for filing a complaint.
- A web application for e-filing of consumer complaints named 'edaakhil.nic.in' has been developed by NIC for the purpose.

About E-Daakhil :

- E-filing was launched by the **National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC)** on **September 7, 2020**.
- **Delhi was the first state** to implement it on September 8, 2020.
- The E-Daakhil portal empowers the consumer and their advocates to file the consumer complaints along with payment of requisite fees online from anywhere for the redressal of their complaints.
- It has been developed and is maintained by the **National Information Centre (NIC)** under the **Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology**.
- The portal facilitates e-filing of consumer complaints in the Consumer Commissions and also has provision of online payment of the fees from anywhere for the redressal of their complaints.
- It also facilitates the consumer commissions to scrutinize the complaints online to accept, reject or forward the complaint to the concerned commission for further processing. and online payment of the fees for filing a complaint.
- The portal has been launched under Consumer Protection Act, 2019, which has come into force from 20th July, 2020.

Digital platform 'Jagrut Tripura' launched to boost e-governance

- The **Tripura** government has come up with a **digital platform to help people get benefits from various schemes of the Centre and the state government**.
- The project was developed by **EasyGov**, a Jio Group company, and it will be available to all the residents of Tripura.
- It will have At least **102 schemes** of various departments of both the governments available on the platform.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

- The digital platform is one of the many proactive initiatives undertaken by the state government to spur a technology-led innovation ecosystem to make **'Atmanirbhar'** (self-reliant) Tripura.
- "With 'Jagrut', we want to empower people to get the benefits they deserve, and the focus is on building a family-centric, progressive model having 'one data one source' and privacy at the core.

Axis Securities launches platform to make investment in bond, debenture hassle free

- **Axis Securities** announced the launch of **'YIELD'** - an online platform to buy and sell bonds as well as debentures in the secondary market.
- YIELD is the first-of-its-kind initiative that allows retail investors direct access to the debt instruments.
- This removes the hassle of filling up physical forms or the need for separate KYC with the bond institutions.
- To facilitate transactions only in secure options, it aggregates only **'AAA'** to **'A'** rated quality debt instruments available for investment in the secondary market.
- A seamless online platform that gives retail investors access to bonds available earlier only to the large corporations, family offices, or HNIs.
- Investing in bonds through YIELD is the answer to the investors seeking new alternative investment avenues for safe and relatively higher returns.

J&K: Ramban District Administration develop mobile app named e-Suvidha

- In the **Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir**, the **District Administration, Ramban** has developed a mobile application named **e-Suvidha**, which shall bring many public delivery services and departments on the digital platform.
- The initiative has been taken on the directions of Lieutenant Governor's Secretariat.
- Deputy Commissioner, Ramban, Mussarat Islam, cleared the decks for the launch of the Mobile App which will be launched after a final trial run next week.
- **Pertinently, the e-Suvidha Mobile App** will be available on the Google Play-store and will be a game changer as it will provide access to the people to all basic services like plumbing, electric works, mobile and laptop troubleshooting, masonry, carpentry and skilled jobs on a digital platform with a click on the mobile phones.
- The application shall also link many important departments like **Health, Community Service Centres, Food & Civil Supplies, Banks and other financial institutions.**

Govt to launch 'Atmanirbhar Niveshak Mitra' portal

- Government will soon launch **'Atma Nirbhar Niveshak Mitra'** portal for handholding and facilitation of domestic investors.
- In order to further strengthen efforts to promote domestic investments, the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)** is in the process of finalising the **'Atmanirbhar Niveshak Mitra'** digital portal.
- The portal is in testing phase and the final version will be ready for launch by 15th May this year.
- The webpage will also be available in **regional languages and mobile App** in due course.

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Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

- The Commerce Ministry has termed the development as one of the most significant digital initiatives being undertaken to target the specific investor interests and ensure swift clearances & approvals throughout the business journey of domestic investors.
- Some of the special features of the Atma Nirbhar Niveshak Mitra portal include One-stop-shop to access all MSME portals; Information about the Approvals, Licenses, Clearances, Incentives & Schemes applicable to specific businesses across different sectors and Information on Manufacturing Clusters and Land Availability.

New mobile app 'BoSubol' on poll stats launched for Assembly Elections

- Ahead of the **assembly elections** in four states and a union territory, a startup firm has unveiled a **mobile application** with poll statistics and data on the country's economy to help voters take fact-based decisions before exercising their franchise
- **The startup - Demokratika- launched the application, BoSubol**, which has economic and political information about all the constituencies in India for **over 60 years on average**, they claimed.
- "Except the election commission's efforts, not much seems to be done by political parties to empower voters.
- Hence, the app is rolled out.
- It will offer a powerful microblogging tool," Ritesh Verma, one of the directors of the company.

Government launches 'Mera Ration' mobile app

- **Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution** launched "**Mera Ration**" **Mobile App** for those ration card holders who migrate to new places in search of livelihood.
- This app will benefit especially those **ration card holders who move to new areas for livelihoods**.
- The app is developed by the **government** in **association** with **NIC** "to facilitate various ONORC related services among **National Food Security Act (NFSA)** beneficiaries, particularly migrant beneficiaries, FPS dealers and other relevant stakeholders.

About Mera Ration App :

- Mera Ration' app identifies the nearest **fair price shop and checks details of their entitlement** and recent transactions.
- The android-based mobile application has been developed by the **National Informatics Centre (NIC)**.
- It is currently available in **Hindi and English language**.
- Gradually, it will be made available in **14 languages**.
- The languages will be identified based on places where migrant people move mostly to.
- Implementation of the One Nation-One Ration Card system ensures availability of ration to beneficiaries under the **National Food Security Act (NFSA)** and other welfare schemes, especially the migrant workers and their families, at any **fair price shop (FPS)** across the country.

NPCI launches UPI-Help on BHIM app for BHIM-UPI Users

- **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)**, the umbrella entity for digital payments in India, has launched **UPI-Help on BHIM UPI**.

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Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

- That will act as a **grievance redressal mechanism for the users** of the BHIM application.
- The redressal mechanism is aimed at creating a hassle-free experience for BHIM UPI app users regarding resolution of various issues.
- Initially the UPI-Help has been made live on the BHIM app for the customers of **State Bank of India, AXIS Bank, HDFC Bank, and ICICI Bank.**
- Customers of Paytm Payments Bank and TJSB Sahakari Bank will also be able to use UPI-Help soon.

Features of the app :

- Enable the users to check the status of the pending transactions,
- Raise complaints against transactions that have not been processed
- Raise complaints the money has not reached the beneficiary,
- Raise complaints against merchant transactions.
- UPI-Help can **resolve complaints online for person-to-person (P2P) transactions.**
- The UPI-Help system is an example of the convergence of technology and innovation for future-proofing customer grievance redressal mechanisms.

About BHIM :

- **BHIM (Bharat Interface for Money)** is an Indian mobile payment App developed by the **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), based on the Unified Payments Interface (UPI).**
- It was Named after B. R. Ambedkar and launched on 30 December 2016,
- It is intended to facilitate e-payments directly through banks and drive towards cashless transactions.

Benefits Of BHIM :

- The application supports all Indian banks which use UPI, which is built over the **Immediate Payment Service (IMPS)** infrastructure and allows the user to instantly transfer money between bank accounts of any two parties.
- It can be used on all mobile devices.

National Telemedicine Service – eSanjeevani make huge consultation

- **National Telemedicine Service - eSanjeevani** has completed **30 lakh consultations.**
- Over 35,000 patients are using this service daily to seek health services.
- **Currently, the National Telemedicine Service is operational in 31 States and Union Territories.**
- Leading 10 States in terms of number of consultations are Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Kerala, Maharashtra, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh.
- Female patients have outnumbered male patients on eSanjeevani OPD.
- As per **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**, the National Telemedicine Service is plugging the digital health divide that exists in urban and rural India.
- It is also addressing the shortage of doctors and specialists at ground level while reducing the burden on secondary and tertiary level hospitals.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

- In line with the **National Digital Health Mission eSanjeevani** is also boosting the digital health ecosystem in the country.
- The National Telemedicine Service comprises two variants of eSanjeevani namely - doctor to doctor telemedicine platform, and patient to doctor telemedicine platform which provides outpatient services to the citizens in the confines of their homes.

CAIT launches vendor onboarding mobile app for its e-commerce portal 'Bharat e Market'

- CAIT launched a **vendor onboarding mobile app** for its upcoming e-commerce portal 'Bharat e Market'.
- The app will **allow businesses and service providers to register on the portal and create their own "e-dukaan"**.
- It has been engaged in a tirade against foreign e-commerce companies, accusing them of violating the country's FDI policy norms
- There will be no charge for creating an e-dukan nor any commission on business done on the portal. The other e-commerce portals are charging **commission from 5 percent to 35 percent on transactions happening on their portal**
- The portal will comply with all rules and regulations of the government both in letter and spirit.

Govt focused to develop, strengthen own mobile app store : Mobile Seva Appstore

- The government, while **encouraging private players to host apps**, is equally keen to develop and strengthen its own **mobile app store**.
- **India's first indigenously developed Appstore, 'Mobile Seva Appstore'**
- It hosts more than 965 live apps from various domains and categories of public services, Minister for Electronics and IT Ravi Shankar Prasad announced.
- According to the Citing India App Market Statistics report 2021, the Minister Mentioned that around **5 percent apps on Android are from Indian Apps developers**.

About Mobile Seva App Store :

- Mobile Seva App Store is a **mobile application** hosting platform which is **owned by the government of India**.
- The App Store has been created to **provide a hosting platform for the Indian mobile application developers**.
- **It is India's first indigenously developed App Store**.
- It will be based upon **service-oriented architecture and cloud-based technologies**.
- The Developers can host their mobile application for the delivery of the government and other public services related to health, education, agriculture, online payments, financial, electoral services, social welfare, transport, food and energy.

POWERGRID Launches Certified E-Tendering Portal "PRANIT"

- A central PSU under **Ministry of Power, Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID)**, has established an **e-Tendering Portal-PRANIT** which will lead to **less paperwork and ease of operation**, making the tendering process **more transparent**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

- The Portal has been certified by **Standardisation, Testing and Quality Certification Directorate (STQC)**, Ministry of **Electronics and Information Technology**, Government of India.

About POWERGRID :

- POWERGRID is now the only organization in India to have an **eProcurement solution on SAP Supplier Relationship Management (SRM)**, complying with all applicable requirements relating to security and transparency as stipulated by STQC.
- POWERGRID in pursuit of digitalisation has been undertaking a number of innovative enhancements within SAP SRM framework

Nirmala Sitharaman launches Central Scrutiny Centre and IEPFA's Mobile App to leverage digital solutions

- Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs Smt. **Nirmala Sitharaman** launched **Central Scrutiny Centre (CSC)** and **Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority's (IEPFA) Mobile App**.
- The two tech-enabled initiatives have been **launched by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs**
- This will leverage digital solutions to achieve the Prime Minister's vision of 'Digitally empowered India.
- These two initiatives would create a new corporate and investor friendly ecosystem.

About the Mobile App :

- The mobile app aims at **achieving the goal of financial literacy, spreading investor awareness, education, and protection among investors.**
- The Mobile App has been developed for citizen engagement and information dissemination to promote awareness among investors.
- The app will have **the facility of tracking the status and progress of IEPF claim refund process.**
- It will also provide a mechanism for investors and common citizens to report on suspected fraudulent schemes.
- Currently, the app is available on Android based devices and can be downloaded from PlayStore.

About CSC :

- The Central Scrutiny Centre will **scrutinize certain Straight Through Process (STP) Forms filed by the corporates on the MCA21 registry and flag the companies for more in-depth scrutiny.**

Revision Points

Applications/Web portals	Launched By/Developed By
Mo-Chhatua App, e-Kalika, Mo Sishu portal, e-manadeya, MAMATA App & MIS	Odisha govt
Gujarat Budget	Gujarat govt
E-Daakhil portal	National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission
Jagrut Tripura	Tripura govt

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Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

YIELD	Axis Securities
e-Suvidha	Jammu & Kashmir
Atmanirbhar Niveshak Mitra	Central government
BoISubol	Demokratika
Mera Ration	Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution
UPI-Help on BHIM app	National Payments Corporation of India
eSanjeevani	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
e-dukaan	CAIT
Mobile Seva Appstore	Central government
PRANIT	Power Grid Corporation of India Limited

Important Sports News

Cricket

2nd ODI National Zone Cricket Championship League for the deaf begins

- The **Indian Deaf Cricket Association (IDCA)** affiliated and recognized by the **Deaf International Cricket Council (DICC)** will organize the **2nd ODI National Zone Cricket Championship** league for the deaf from **March 1 to 5, 2021**.
- The **50-over tournament to be held in New Delhi** will witness deaf cricketing talent from across the country competing for the championship title.
- The tournament will also hand over a handsome prize money for various categories of awards.
- The 'Champion Winner' team will get a cash reward of INR 1,00,001 while the 'Runner-up' team will be given a cash prize of INR 50,001.
- The Man of the Series will be given INR 5,100, the Best Bowler & Best Batsmen would be given INR 2500 per match and the Man of the Match will be given a cash prize of INR 1100 per match.

India beats England in final Cricket Test match, Qualifies for World Test Championship Final

- **India defeated England** in the **final Cricket test match** at **Ahmedabad** to enter the final of the inaugural edition of the **World Test Championship**.
- The hosts won the fourth and final Test comprehensively by a margin of an innings and **25 runs**.
- Australia have now been eliminated from the ICC World Test Championship.
- **India made 365 runs** in their **first innings**.
- India deserved to be in the final being at the top with 520 points.
- India will face New Zealand in the final of the ICC World Test Championship at Lord's between June 18 and June 22.

Ravichandran Ashwin & Beaumont declared Player of the month for February by ICC

- **India's premier off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin** was named the **ICC men's Player of the Month for February**.

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Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

- Ashwin played in **three tests in the four match series** scored a 106 in the second innings of India's second Test victory over England at Chennai and took his 400th Test wicket in the third Test victory at Ahmedabad.
- Ashwin scored a **total of 176 runs** across these games and took **24 wickets**
- In the **Women's category**, England's **Tammy Beaumont** has been named the **ICC Women's Player of the Month for February**.
- Beaumont played three ODIs in February against New Zealand where she passed fifty in each of these, totalling 231 runs.

Player of the Month for January :

- Indian wicketkeeper-batsman **Rishabh Pant**

Road Safety World Series T-20 India Legends beat Sri Lanka Legends to win 2020-21

- On **March 21, 2021**, India Legends defeated Sri Lanka Legends by **14 runs** in the **final of Road Safety World Series to clinch the title**.
- It was **held at Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Stadium in Raipur, Chhattisgarh**.
- India Legends, put on a **huge total of 181 for four** from their **allotted 20 overs**.
- **Sachin Tendulkar, captain of the India Legends**, finished the tournament as the **third-highest run-getter** with 233 runs from seven matches.
- Player of the Match – **Yusuf Pathan (India Legends)**
- Most Runs – **Tillakaratne Dilshan**
- Most Wickets – **Tillakaratne Dilshan**
- Player of the Series – **Tillakaratne Dilshan (Sri Lanka Legends)**

About Road Safety World Series (RSWS) :

- RSWS, is a **T20 cricket competition** featuring retired cricketers and is **organised by the Road Safety Cell of Maharashtra to raise awareness about road safety**.
- The 2020-21 edition of the series featured notable retired players from **India, England, Sri Lanka, West Indies, South Africa, Australia and Bangladesh**.
- It was **held between March 7 to 21, 2021 at Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Stadium**.
- **Sunil Gavaskar**, former India captain, being the **commissioner of the series**
- **Sachin Tendulkar** being its **brand ambassador**.
- **Ravi Gaikwad** is the **founder of the Road Safety World**
- The tournament was to be played in a **round-robin** format.
- The Road Safety World Series was approved by the **BCCI**.
- The first edition of the tournament began in **March 2020**, with the tournament set to take place across venues in **Mumbai and Pune**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

For ICC Women's World Cup 2022 'Girl Gang' announced official song

- **Girl Gang**, a track by New Zealand singer **Gin Wigmore**, has been announced as the **official song of the 2022 ICC Women's World Cup**.
- The tournament is set to be **hosted in New Zealand from March 4 to April 3, 2022**.
- Originally it was scheduled to be held from **February 6 to March 7, 2021**, the World Cup was postponed by a year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The International Cricket Council (ICC) made the announcement in an event at Mt Maunganui Beach

Essence of the Song :

- To **celebrate women coming together to "fight against a society that so often pits us against each other and tears us down"**.

Virat Kohli moves to 4th position, Rohit Sharma to 14th : ICC T20 Player rankings

- **India captain Virat Kohli and vice-captain Rohit Sharma** are among the India batsmen to progress in the **ICC Men's T20I Player Rankings** after clinching the home series against **England 3-2 in Ahmedabad**.
- **Kohli** has moved up one place to **fourth position** and he is the **highest-ranked from India ahead of KL Rahul**.
- **Rohit** moved up **three places to 14th in the ICC Men's T20I Player Rankings**.
- While **Yadav** rose from the bottom to the 66th position, **Pant** has moved up 11 places to 69th in the rankings.
- **Shreyas Iyer** has moved up five places to a career-best **26th position** while rookie **Suryakumar Yadav** and wicketkeeper-batsman **Rishabh Pant** also made rapid progress.
- Seam bowler **Bhuvneshwar Kumar** has moved up 21 places to 24th while **Hardik Pandya** has advanced 47 places to 78th.

Football

Odisha to host Indian Women's League this year

- The **All India Football Federation** confirmed **Odisha** as the venue for the **2020-21** edition of the **Indian Women's League**.
- This is the fifth edition of the IWL, which began in 2016 and was held in Delhi. The current champions of the tournament are **Gokulam Kerala FC**, beating **Kryphsa FC 3-2** in the final on February 14, 2020 in Bengaluru.
- The inaugural edition of the tournament was also held in Odisha at Cuttack in 2016.

Mumbai City FC Beat ATK Mohun Bagan to Win 2020-21 ISL League Winners' Shield

- **Mumbai City FC** beat **ATK Mohun Bagan 2-0** and finished at the top of the ongoing Indian Super League, thereby clinching the **ISL League Winners Shield** and securing a spot in the **2022 AFC Champions League**.
- The finals of the ISL was held at the GMC Stadium in Goa on February 28, 2021.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

- Mumbai City FC, coached by Sergio Lobera, is one of the eight clubs worldwide whose majority stakes are owned by City Football Group (CFG). Manchester City, a top side in the English Premier League, is the flagship club of the CFG.
- In 2019, Mumbai City sold 65 percent of its stake to CFG whose majority stakeholders are Abu Dhabi United Group.

Mumbai, Ahmedabad and Bhubaneswar to host AFC Women's Asian Cup 2022

- On March 26, 2021, The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) announced the venues for the AFC Women's Asian Cup 2022.

AFC Women's Asian Cup 2022 Venues :

- DY Patil Stadium - Navi Mumbai,
- TransStadia - Ahmedabad
- Kalinga Stadium - Bhubaneswar
- The Women's Asian Cup will kickstart on January 20 with the final set to be played on February 6 in 2022.
- The 2022 AFC Asian Women's Cup is the second of the two international women's football competitions to be held in India next year, with the 2022 FIFA U-17 Women's Cup being the other.

Others

Indian men's skeet team wins bronze in ISSF World Cup

- The Indian trio of Mairaj Ahmed Khan, Angad Vir Singh Bajwa and Gurjoat Khangura won the bronze medal in men's skeet team event at the International Shooting Sport Federation tournament (ISSF) Shotgun World Cup in Cairo.
- The Indians defeated the Kazakhstan team of David Pochivalov, Eduard Yechshenko and Alexandr Mukhamediyev 6-2 in the bronze medal match on the third competition day of the International Shooting Sport Federation tournament.

Boxing: Deepak Kumar wins silver at Strandja Memorial Tournament in Bulgaria

- In Boxing, Deepak Kumar (52kg) wins the silver medal at the 72nd Strandja Memorial Tournament in Sofia, Bulgaria.
- He lost the final face-off in a split decision against Bulgaria's Daniel Asenov in the men's flyweight.
- The 23-year-old youngster belongs to Haryana's Hisar, which is known as the 'City of Steel', for being India's largest manufacturer of galvanised iron.

Vinesh Phogat beats Vanesa Kaladzinskaya to win gold in Ukraine wrestling event

- India's star wrestler Vinesh Phogat defeated 2017 world champion V Kaladzinskaya to win the gold medal at the Outstanding Ukrainian Wrestlers and Coaches Memorial tournament.
- Haryana's Bhiwani-based Vinesh won in the 53kg bout with a 10-8 lead.
- She is the only Indian woman wrestler to have qualified for the Tokyo Olympics Games in the 53 kg category

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

Indian shuttlers Varun, Malvika win Uganda International titles

- On Feb 25 to 28, 2021, Indian shuttlers **Varun Kapur** and **Malvika Bansod** registered hard-fought wins to clinch the **men's and women's singles titles respectively at the 2021 Uganda International in Kampala.**
- Varun beat his Indian counterpart Sankar Muthusamy, 21-18 16-21 21-17 to win the men's singles final.
- Meanwhile Malvika won 17-21 25-23 21-10 over compatriot Anupama Upadhyaya in the women singles summit clash.

J&K tops medals tally at Khelo India Winter National Games in Gulmarg

- Union Territory of **Jammu and Kashmir** topped the medals tally in the **second edition of Khelo India Winter National Games.**
- The **five-day mega sports** event which began on 26th of February, concluded in the famous ski resort of Gulmarg in north Kashmir's Baramulla district.
- **J&K won 11 gold, 18 silver and 5 bronze medals.**
- The event was e-inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- The event was organised by the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in collaboration with the J&K Sports Council and the Winter Games Association of Jammu and Kashmir.
- In the event, more than 1,000 athletes from 27 states and union territories took part.

Women's Trap Team wins silver as India finish year's first Shotgun World Cup with 2 medals

- India's **Women's Trap** team trio of **Kirti Gupta, Manisha Keer** and **Rajeshwari Kumari** won a **silver medal** on the concluding day of the year's first **International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup Shotgun stage, in Cairo, Egypt, going down 4-6 to Russia in the final.**
- There were a total of seven 25-shot rounds, five of which had been shot in the previous days. All three Indian women shot scores of 20 or more in the final two qualifying rounds, with Manisha top-scoring for them with 158 out of 175 shots.
- With this, the Indian team managed to collect two medals at the tournament. Earlier, the Men's Skeet team bagged a bronze medal.

India finish with 10 medals including one gold at Boxam International

- From March 01 to 07, 2021, The **35th** edition of the **Boxam International Tournament** was held at **Castellon**, in Spain.
- A 14-member (8 men and 6 women) Indian contingent had participated in the event and concluded the game with 10 medals including

1. 1 Gold,
2. 8 Silver and
3. 1 Bronze.

Gold Medal Winner :

Manish Kaushik

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

- The 2018 Commonwealth Games silver medallist Kaushik, who returned into the ring for the first time after the Asian Olympic Qualifiers held in March last year, beat Denmark's Nikolai Terteryan with a split 3-2 decision in the men's 63kg summit bout

Silver Medal Winners :

- Vikas Krishan – men's 69kg
- Pooja Rani – women's 75kg
- Jasmine – women's 57kg
- Simranjit Kaur – women's 60kg
- Mohammed Hussamuddin – men's 57kg
- Ashish Kumar – men's 75kg
- Sumi Sangwan – men's 81kg
- Satish Kumar – men's 91kg

Bronze Medal Winner

- M C Mary Kom – 51kg

Vinesh Phogat continues her golden run, reclaims World No. 1 rank with gold at Matteo Pellicone

- **Vinesh Phogat** continued her golden return to wrestling after she defeated **Canada's Diana Weicker 4-0 to win gold medal at Matteo Pellicone Rome Rankings.**
- This is her **second title** win in less than two weeks.
- With this she reclaimed the world No.1 spot.
- Phogat entered the Matteo Pellicone final in a dominant fashion, confirming a medal for India in **53kg women wrestling.**
- The 26-year-old defeated Samantha Leigh Stewart (CAN) by fall to confirm a podium finish.
- It is the second successive gold medal for a 27 year Haryana wrestler, who had won the previous gold at this competition in 2020 by beating Jordan Oliver of the USA in the final.

PV Sindhu settles for silver medal in BWF Swiss Open Super 30

- On **March 07, 2021**, India's ace **shuttler PV Sindhu** settled for a **silver medal in the BWF Swiss Open Super 300 at Basel.**
- She went down against World No. 3 Spaniard and reigning Olympic champion Carolina Marin 12-21, 5-21, in the final of the women's singles event.

BWF Swiss Open 2021 Winners List :

- Men's Singles : **Viktor Axelsen (Denmark)** beat Kunlavut Vitidsarn (Thailand)
- Men's Doubles : **Kim Astrup and Anders Skaarup Rasmussen (Denmark)** beat Mark Lamsfuss-Marvin Seidel (Germany)
- Women's Singles : **Carolina Marin (Spain)** beat PV Sindhu (India)

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

- Mixed Doubles : **Thom Gicquel-Delphine Delrue (France)** beat Denmark pair **Mathias Christiansen-Alexandra Boje**

NADA's disciplinary panel imposes sanctions on weightlifter & boxer for violating code

- The **National Anti-Doping Agency's (NADA)** disciplinary panel imposed sanctions on **weightlifter Madhavan R** and **boxer Ruchika** for violation of its code.
- Weightlifter **Madhavan R**, **tested positive for prohibited substance Phentermine and Mephentermine**, was handed a **four-year ban** by the Anti Doping Disciplinary Panel.
- A **two-year ban** on **boxer Ruchika** after she was found **positive for Furosemide**.
- The athletes have an option to appeal against the sanctions to a higher panel **Anti Doping Appeals Panel (ADAP)**.

Bhavani Devi becomes first Indian fencer to qualify for the Olympic Games

- **Tamil Nadu's Chadalavada Anandha Bhavani Devi** became the **first-ever fencer from India to qualify for the Olympic Games**.
- Bhavani qualified through the **Adjusted Official Ranking (AOR) Method**.
- Two individual spots were up for grabs for the **Asia-Oceania region based on the world rankings as of April 5, 2021**.
- She is ranked **45th and occupies one of the two available slots** based on the ranking.
- The **Tokyo Olympics 2021 is scheduled to take place from July 23 to August 8 2021**.

World class winter sports academy in set up in Gulmarg

- The **Government** announced the **Rajya Sabha** would soon set up a **world class winter sports academy in Gulmarg**.
- In addition to that **100 small sports centres under the "Khelo India" mission across Jammu and Kashmir would be set up by the government**.
- Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports (Independent Charge) **Kiren Rijiju** mentioned the government will also hold the national camp for winter games in Gulmarg this year
- **Two 'khelo India' centres of excellence would also be set up in Srinagar and Jammu**, with different disciplines.
- The Government has sanctioned setting up of **40 small centres under 'Khelo India'** 60 more such centres would be opened soon.

India To Host Asian Boxing Championships 2021 From May 21 To 31

- On **March 15, 2021**, **International Boxing Association (AIBA)** announced that **Asian Boxing Championships 2021 will be hosted by New Delhi, India from May 21-31**.
- It will be the **first boxing tournament in Asia to be held in 2021**.
- **Asian Elite Men & Women Boxing Championships** will be the first boxing tournament of Asia to be held in 2021.

Note :

- The **2019 edition of the Asian Amateur Boxing Championships** set a new record with **304 boxers participating from 34 countries**.

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- In 2019, for the first time in the tournament history both men & women fought in the same championship and that was held in Bangkok, Thailand.

Dhanalakshmi Beats Dutee Chand To Win 100m Gold- Federation Cup Athletics

- On March 16, 2021, Sprinter S Dhanalakshmi beat national record holder Dutee Chand to win the women's 100m sprint final in the Federation Cup Senior National Athletics Championships in Patiala.
- About Sprinter S Dhanalakshmi :
- The 22-year-old Dhanalakshmi of Tamil Nadu took the gold by clocking 11.39 seconds.
- Dhanalakshmi to become the fastest woman of the championships.
- Odisha-based Dutee clocked 11.58 seconds to be placed at second place.
- Another Tamil Nadu runner Archana Suseendran was third in 11.76.
- Veteran MR Poovamma, representing Karnataka, took the gold in women's 400m, winning the final race in 53.57 seconds. Tamil Nadu's Subha Venkatesan (54.48) and Kiran Pahal of Haryana took the silver and bronze respectively.

In men's 100m final category :

- Gurindervir Singh of Punjab won gold in 10.32 seconds,
- Second Position : Elakkiyadasan Kannada of Tamil Nadu (10.43)
- Third Position : Maharashtra's Satish Krishnakumar (10.56)

Rawalpindi's KRL Stadium renamed after Shoaib Akhtar

- The KRL Stadium in Rawalpindi has been renamed after former Pakistan speedster Shoaib Akhtar.
- Cricket authorities in Rawalpindi honoured Akhtar for his services to Pakistan Cricket for years.

About Akhtar :

- Akhtar, was one of the most lethal fast bowlers,
- He battled several injury issues to represent Pakistan in 224 international games.
- Akhtar played 46 Tests, 163 ODIs, and 15 T20Is for Pakistan snaring 178, 247, and 19 wickets in his illustrious 14-year career.
- He was recognized as the world's fastest bowler, having bowled a delivery at 161.3 km/h (100.23 mph) in an ODI against England.

Sports Ministry decides to extend Khelo India scheme from 2021-22 to 2025-26

- The Sports Ministry has decided to extend the Khelo India scheme for a period of five years, from 2021-22 to 2025-26.
- An amount of Rs. 8750 crore has been estimated as financial implication of the new Khelo India Scheme (2021-22 to 2025-26) by the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC).
- **Note** : An amount of Rs 657.71 crore has been allocated in the Budget Estimate (B.E.) for the year 2021-22 under the Khelo India Scheme.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2021

- In addition to that Rs 13.73 crore had been released till then for the promotion of sports among disabled sports persons under one vertical of the Khelo India Scheme, namely, 'Promotion of sports among persons with disabilities'.

Nozomi Okuhara clinches Women's title ; Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia wins All England Badminton C'ships Men's title

- In badminton, Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia has won the All England Badminton Championships men's title as he defeated Denmark's Viktor Axelsen in the summit clash.
- The 22-year-old defeated Axelsen 30-29, 20-22, 21-9 in the summit clash.
- He is the first Malaysian to win the All England Open since Lee Chong Wei in 2017.
- Japan's Nozomi Okuhara won the women's single title after she defeated Thailand's Pornpawee Chochuwong 21-12, 21-16 in the finals to win All England Badminton Championships 2021.
- It is the second All England Open title for the 26-year-old, who last won it in 2016.

About Winners List :

Women's Female	Nozomi Okuhara
Men's Single	Lee Zii Jia (22 Years)
Women's Doubles	Mayu Matsumoto Wakana Nagahara
Men's Doubles	Hiroyuki Endo Yuta Watanabe
Mixed Doubles	Yuta Watanabe Arisa Higashino

India finish para shooting WC with 7 medals

- India ended the 2021 World Shooting Para Sport competitions with seven medals.
- It was held at Al Ain in UAE from 15 to 25 March 2021.
- India finished in third place with two gold medals, one silver and four bronze medals.
- Ukraine topped with 11 medals (five gold, five silver and one bronze) ahead of hosts UAE which won five medals (three gold and two silver).
- A total of 120 athletes from 24 nations competed at Al Ain 2021.
- This was the first world shooting para sport competition in more than one year as the 2020 season was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Gold medal winners for India :

- Manish Narwal (P4 mixed 50m air pistol SH2)
- Singhraj (P1 men's 10m air pistol SH1)

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Silver Medal Winner for India :

- Avani Lekhara – R2 women’s 10m air rifle SH1

Bronze Medal Winners for India :

- Rahul Jakhar – P3 Mixed 25m Pistol SH1
- Singhraj – P4 Mixed 50m Pistol SH1
- Sriharsha DEVARADDI RAMAKRISHNA – R4 Mixed 10m Air Rifle Standing SH2
- Sidhartha BABU – R6 Mixed 50m Rifle Prone SH1

In ISSF Shooting World Cup India tops the medals tally with 15 gold, 9 silver & 6 bronze

- India finished at the **top of the medals table at the 2021 ISSF World Cup New Delhi.**
- It was **held from 18 to 29 March 2021 at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range in New Delhi.**
- India Procured **30 medals** which included **15 gold, 9 silver and 6 bronze.**
- In that **USA came second with eight medals** including four gold, three silver and one bronze.

Gold Medal Winners

1. Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar – Men’s 50 metre rifle three positions
2. Saurabh Chaudhary, Shahzar Rizvi and Abhishek Verma – Men’s 10 metre air pistol team event
3. Swapnil Kusale, Chain Singh and Neeraj Kumar – Men’s 50 metre rifle three positions team event
4. Gurjoat Khangura, Angad Vir Singh Bajwa and Mairaj Ahmad Khan – Men’s Skeet team event
5. Kynan Chenai, Prithviraj Toidaiman, Lakshay – Men’s Trap team event
6. Chinki Yadav – Women’s 25 metre pistol
7. Yashaswini Singh Deswal – Women’s 10 metre air pistol
8. Yashaswini Singh Deswal, Manu Bhaker, Shri Nivetha Paramanantham – Women’s 10 metre air pistol team
9. Rahi Sarnobat, Manu Bhaker, Chinki Yadav – Women’s 25 metre pistol event
10. Rajeshwari Kumar, Shreyasi Singh, Manisha Keer – Women’s Trap event
11. Saurabh Chaudhary/Manu Bhaker – 10 metre air pistol Mixed Team event
12. Divyansh Singh Panwar/Elavenil Valarivan – 10 metre air rifle Mixed Team
13. Tejaswini/Vijayveer Sidhu – 25 metre rapid fire pistol Mixed Team
14. Sanjeev Rajput/Tejaswini Sawant – 50 metre rifle three positions Mixed Team
15. Angad Vir Singh Bajwa/Ganemat Sekhon – Trap Mixed Team

Silver Medal Winners

1. Vijayveer Sidhu – Men’s 25 metre rapid fire pistol
2. Saurabh Chaudhary – Men’s 10 metre air pistol
3. Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar, Deepak Kumar, Pankaj Kumar – Men’s 10 metre air rifle team event
4. Vijayveer Sindhu, Adarsh Singh, Gurpreet Singh – Men’s 25 metre rapid fire pistol team event
5. Rahi Sarnobat – Women’s 25 metre pistol

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6. Manu Bhaker – Women's 10 metre air pistol
7. Anjum Moudgil, Shreya Saksena, Gaayathri Nithyanandam – Women's 50 metre rifle three positions team event
8. Parinaaz Dhaliwal, Kartiki Singh Shaktawat, Ganemat Sekhon – Women's Skeet team event
9. Abhidnya Ashok Patil/Gurpreet Singh – 25 metre rapid fire pistol Mixed Team

Bronze Medal Winners

1. Divyansh Singh Panwar – Men's 10 metre air rifle
2. Abhishek Verma – Men's 10 metre air pistol
3. Manu Bhaker – Women's 25 metre pistol
4. Ganemat Sekhon – Skeet
5. Abhishek Verma/Yashaswini Singh Deswal – 10 metre air pistol Mixed Team
6. Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar/Sunidhi Chauhan – 50 metre rifle three positions Mixed Team

Lewis Hamilton wins Bahrain Grand Prix 2021

- In March 28, 2021, Lewis Hamilton won the 2021 Bahrain Grand Prix.
- It was held at Bahrain International Circuit, Sakhir, Bahrain.
- This was Lewis Hamilton's 96th Formula one Victory.
- Bahrain Grand Prix is the inaugural GP of the 2021 Formula one world championship.
- Formula one world championship was Organized by Federation International de L'Automobile.

Revision Points

Organization	Headquarters	Key Person
Muthoot Group	Kochi	M. G. George Muthoot
HCL Technologies	Noida	C Vijayakumar
Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)	New Delhi	Thulani Dlamini
United Nations	New York, USA	António Guterres
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	Paris, France	Audrey Azoulay
World Trade Organization	Geneva, Switzerland	Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala
TVS Motor Company	Chennai	KN Radhakrishnan
All India Football Federation	New Delhi	Praful Patel
National Anti-Doping Agency	New Delhi	Navin Agarwal
International Shooting Sport Federation	Munich, Germany	Vladimir Lisin

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Asian Football Confederation	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	Salman bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa
Board of Control for Cricket in India	Mumbai	Saurav Ganguly
International Cricket Council	Dubai, United Arab Emirates	Shashank Manohar
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)	Washington DC	James Morhard
International Solar Alliance	Gurugram	Dr Ajay Mathur
Defence Research Development Organization	New Delhi	Sateesh Reddy
Bharat Electronics Limited	Bengaluru	Venkateswara Gowtama Mannava
Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd	Bengaluru	R Madhavan
Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL)	New Delhi	Anupam Shrivastava
SpaceX	California, United States	Elon Musk
Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)	Bengaluru	K Sivan
International Olympic Committee	Lausanne, Switzerland	Thomas Bach
United Nations Environment Programme	Nairobi, Kenya	Inger Andersen
Reliance	Mumbai	Mukesh Ambani
Uber	California, USA	Dara Khosrowshahi
HP	California, USA	Enrique Loeres
Samsung	Seoul, South Korea	Kim, Ki Nam
Bharat Dynamics Limited	Hyderabad	Commodore Siddharth Mishra
Cochin Shipyard Ltd	Cochin	Madhu S Nair
Invest India	New Delhi	Deepak Bagla
Omega Seiki	New Delhi	Deb Mukherji
Financial Action Task Force	Paris	Marcus Pleyer
Shanghai Cooperation Organisation	Beijing	Vladimir Norov
Bank of England	London, UK	Andrew Bailey
Asia Pacific	Singapore	Sanjay Goel
Julius Baer India	Mumbai	Ashish Gumashta

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Kia Motors India	New Delhi	Kookhyun Shim
GoAir	Ahmedabad	Kaushik Khona
Zoomcar	Bengaluru	Uri Levine
Infosys	Bengaluru	Salil Parekh
Intel	California, USA	Patrick P. Gelsinger
Unique Identification Authority of India	New Delhi	Saurbah Garg
Airports Authority of India	New Delhi	Sanjeev Kumar
Food Corporation of India	New Delhi	Atish Chandra
Finance Industry Development Council	Mumbai	T T Srinivasaraghavan
International Boxing Association	Lausanne, Switzerland	Umar Kremlyov
Hollywood Critics Association	Los Angeles	Scott Menzel
World Economic Forum	Cologny, Switzerland	Børge Brende
National Crime Records Bureau	New Delhi	Ramphal Pawar
India Trade Promotion Organisation	New Delhi	N.K. Mehra
JPMorgan	New York	Jamie Dimon
Visakhapatnam Port Trust	Visakhapatnam	K Rama Mohana Rao
Our Food Pvt Ltd	Visakhapatnam	Shashi Menchu
Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust	Mumbai	Ajay Bhokare
SpiceJet	Gurugram	Ajay Singh
Avenue Capital	New York, USA	Marc Lasry
Bharat Biotech International	Hyderabad	Dr. V Krishna Mohan
Biovet	Selangor, Malaysia	René Lallier
Sapigen Biologix	Hyderabad	Krishna Murthy Ella & Raches Virendradev Ella
Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd	Mumbai	Mukesh Kumar Surana

Important Obituaries

Name	Field
Vishnu Narayanan Namboothiri	Malayalam poet, priest and academician
Michael Somare (father of the nation)	Papua New Guinea's first prime minister
Nandkumar Singh Chauhan	Bharatiya Janata Party Lok Sabha MP

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MG George Muthoot	Chairman, Muthoot Group of Companies
N S Lakshminarayana Bhatta	Kannada poet, critic, and translator
Ishar Singh Deol	Athlete (Dhyan Chand National Sports Awardee)
Anshuman Singh	Former Rajasthan Governor (governor of Gujarat state in 1998)
Hamed Bakayoko	Prime Minister of Ivory Coast
Shrikant Moghe	Marathi actor
Olivier Dassault	French billionaire MP (considered the 361st richest man in the world)
Marvin Hagler (USA)	Former middleweight champion
Laxman Pai	Artist & Painter (Padma Bhushan awardee, Nehru Award and Lalit Kala Akademi Award)
Guru Chemancheri Kunhiraman Nair	Kathakali Maestro & Padma Shri awardee
Dilip Gandhi	Union Minister of State, Ministry of Shipping & BJP leader
Lou Ottens	Inventor of the cassette tape (Played a major role in the development of the first CD)
Barrister Moudud Ahmed	Committee member of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party
John Magufuli	President, Tanzania
G V Ramakrishna	Former chairperson of SEBI
Sagar Sarhadi (Known for films like 'Kabhi Kabhie', 'Silсила', and 'Bazaar')	Bollywood writer and director
Nawal El Saadawi	Egyptian author
Anil Dharker	Journalist and author (Founder and director of the Mumbai International Literary Festival)
Laxmipriya Mohapatra	Odissi dancer (wife of classical dancer Kelucharan Mohapatra)
KC Chakrabarty	Former RBI deputy governor

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